

THE ROLE OF ANDREI SERGEEVICH PROZOROV IN THE THREE SISTERS
BY ANTON CHEKHOV

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of the Department of Theater
Brooklyn College

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the MFA Degree

by
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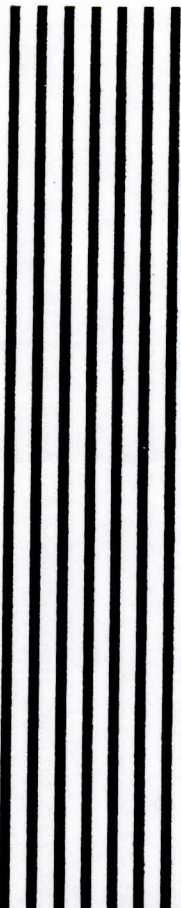
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To Gordon

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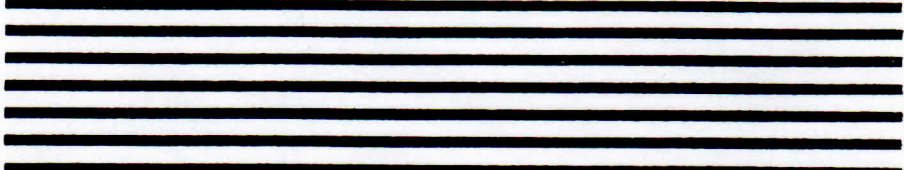
PLAY SCRIPT

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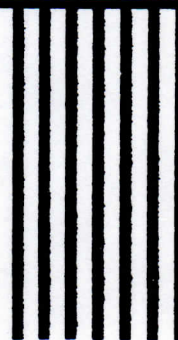
ANTON CHEKHOV'S

**THREE
SISTERS**

A NEW ENGLISH VERSION
BY JEAN-CLAUDE VAN ITALLIE

A decorative element consisting of seven horizontal black lines of equal height and width, positioned below the star.

★
DRAMATISTS
PLAY SERVICE
INC.



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An audio cassette containing the sound effects which may be used in connection with the production of this play, can be obtained from Thomas J. Valentino, Inc., 151 West 46th Street, New York, N.Y. 10036.

Door bell, sleigh bells
Clock striking
Cannon shot
Fire alarm bell

This version of *THREE SISTERS* was first produced at Rokeby Estate in Rhinebeck, New York in July of 1979. It was directed by Lawrence Sacharow. The actors were: Deborah DeSnoo, Kenn Eisenbraun, Dennis Gregory, Eivind Harum, Davidson Lloyd, Lou Miranda, Didi O'Connell, Elena Prischepenko, Moishe Rosenfeld, Margo Lee Sherman, Mary Ritter, Joel Rooks, and David Wolpe.

A reading of this version was presented on WBAI radio on October 10, 1979. The actors were: Seth Allen, Sandy Kadet, Shami Chaikin, Steven Gilborn, Wendy Gimbel, Linda Hunt, Karen Ludwig, Rosemary Quinn, Jean-Claude van Itallie, David Willinger, and David Wolpe.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

PRÓZOROV, ANDRÉI SERGÉEVICH

NATÁLYA IVÁNOVNA, (NATASHA), his fiancée, later his wife

OLGA
MÁSHA
IRÍNA

} his sisters

KULÝGIN, FYÓDOR ILÝCH, a high school teacher, Masha's husband

VERSHÍNIN, ALEXÁNDER IGNÁTEVICH, Lieutenant Colonel, Battery
Commander

TÚZENBACH, NICOLÁI LVÓVICH, Baron, Lieutenant

SOLYÓNY, VASÍLY VASÍLEVICH, Captain

CHEBUTÝKIN, IVÁN ROMÁNICH, Army Doctor

FEDÓTIK, ALEXÉI PETRÓVICH, Lieutenant

RODÉ, VLADÍMIR KÁRLOVICH, Lieutenant

FERAPÓNT, Man-of-all-work of the County Council, an old man

ANFÍSA, the Nurse, an old woman of 80

The action takes place in a provincial town.

THREE SISTERS

ACT ONE

The Prozorovs' house. A sitting room with colonnades, behind which we glimpse a larger room: a hall. It's noon; outside is bright, sunny. In the hall the table is being set for lunch. Olga, in the dark blue uniform of a teacher at the girls' high school, sits down, gets up, walks about, continually correcting pupils' notebooks. Masha, in black, is seated, reading a thin book, her hat on her knees. Irina, in white, is standing; she is daydreaming.

OLGA. The fifth of May. Father died a year ago today, your name day, Irina. So cold . . . it was snowing. I didn't think I'd survive, and you, you fainted and lay there like a corpse. But now it's been a year, and look, we're remembering, and the pain isn't overwhelming us. You're wearing white, and your face is beaming . . . *(The clock strikes twelve.)* It struck then like that, too. *(Pause.)* I remember when they were carrying father, the music, the guns saluting at the cemetery, There weren't many people for a general, commander of a brigade. Still, it was raining, such a rain, and snow.

IRINA. Why think about it! *(Behind the columns, in the hall, near the table, Baron Tuzenbach, Chebutykin, and Solyony appear.)*

OLGA. It's warm today, we can leave the windows wide open. Here the birches have no leaves even at this season. Eleven years ago we left Moscow, when father was given command of the brigade. Eleven years ago, and I remember it perfectly. In the beginning of May, at this season, it's warm in Moscow, flowers are blooming; the city is flooded with sunlight. It's as if I were there yesterday . . . My God! This morning when I woke, seeing the floods of light, the spring, I was full of joy and I felt a passionate desire to go home.

CHEBUTYKIN. The hell with that!

TUZENBACH. Of course it's just nonsense. *(Masha, who's been sitting dreamily over her book, begins quietly whistling a song.)*

OLGA. Don't whistle, Masha. How can you! (*Pause.*) Since I go to the high school every day and give private lessons until night, I have a constant headache . . . and I think like an old woman. And it's true: I'm becoming an old woman. For four years now, since I began at the high school, I've been feeling my energy and my youth draining from me drop by drop, day by day. Only one dream grows and becomes clearer and clearer in me . . .

IRINA. To leave for Moscow. To sell this house, everything, and to go.

OLGA. Yes! To go to Moscow, quickly, very quickly. (*Chebutykin and Tuzenbach laugh.*)

IRINA. Andrei will probably become a professor, and in any case he won't want to stay here. The only obstacle is our poor Masha.

OLGA. Masha will come to Moscow every summer. (*Masha whistles quietly.*)

IRINA. With God's help it will all work out. (*She looks out the window.*) It's so beautiful out today. I don't know why I feel so happy. This morning . . . I remembered it was my name-day . . . suddenly a tremendous joy, all my childhood, when Mama was still alive . . . What wonderful feelings all of a sudden, what feelings!

OLGA. You look radiant today, wonderfully beautiful. And so does Masha. And Andrei would look good too, only he's getting fat, it doesn't suit him. And I have aged. I'm too thin. It's from getting so angry at the high school girls. But today, today I am free, I can stay home; I have no headache, and I feel younger than yesterday. After all, I'm only twenty-eight . . . Everything's for the best, it all comes from God . . . still, it seems to me if I'd gotten married, if I'd stayed at home, it would be better . . . (*Pause.*) I would have loved my husband.

TUZENBACH. (*To Solyony.*) You're so full of rumors I can't listen to you any more. (*He comes into the living room.*) I forgot to tell you: today you'll receive a visit from our new battery commander, Ver-shinin. (*He sits at the piano.*)

OLGA. Good. That's fine.

IRINA. Is he old?

TUZENBACH. No, not too. Forty, forty-five. (*He plays softly.*) A good person, I think. Certainly not stupid. But he talks a lot.

IRINA. Is he interesting?

TUZENBACH. Yes, rather, only he has a wife, a mother-in-law, and two little girls. It's his second marriage. Everywhere he goes to call he talks about them: his wife and the two girls. You'll hear

about them soon enough. She, his wife, is a sort of half-wit. She wears braids, like a child, she talks very dramatically about intellectual things, and occasionally attempts suicide, apparently to annoy her husband. I would have left a character like that long ago, but he's more patient, he only complains.

SOLYONY. (*Comes from the hall with Chebulykin.*) I can only lift thirty kilos with one hand, but with two: eighty, maybe eighty-five. Conclusion: two men are stronger than one. Not only twice as strong, but three times, maybe more.

CHEBUTYKIN. (*Reading the newspaper as he walks.*) To help fight baldness, take ten grams of naphthaline to a half liter of alcohol. Dissolve and apply daily. (*Takes notes in his notebook.*) We'll take note of that! (*To Solyony.*) So, as I was saying, into a bottle you push a little cork pierced by a glass tube. Then you take a tiny pinch of alum, the most ordinary substance in the world . . .

IRINA. Ivan Romanich, my dear Ivan Romanich!

CHEBUTYKIN. What? What, my little angel? My delight.

IRINA. Tell me why I'm so happy today. It's as if I had sails, and above me, a wide blue sky, without end, where great white birds are gliding. Why should I feel like that? How come?

CHEBUTYKIN. (*Kissing both her hands tenderly.*) My white bird . . .

IRINA. This morning . . . after I got up and washed, suddenly everything seemed quite clear to me. I now know how to live. Dear Ivan Romanich I know everything. Each man must labor, work by the sweat of his brow; that's the meaning of life, its goal, its happiness, its joy. The worker who gets up at dawn to break up stones on the road is happy . . . so is the shepherd, and the teacher of little children, and the engineer who works on the railroad . . . My God, it's easy enough for a man . . . But it's better to be an ox, a horse, anything, than a young woman who wakes up at noon, has coffee in bed, and spends two hours dressing . . . That's dreadful. I need to work the way one needs water on a hot day. And if I don't get up early, and if I continue doing nothing, you must stop being my friend, Ivan Romanich.

CHEBUTYKIN. (*Tenderly.*) All right. I promise.

OLGA. Papa trained us to get up at seven. Irina still wakes up then, but she stays in bed until nine, dreaming . . . and looking very serious. (*She laughs.*)

IRINA. I'm still a little girl to you. You're always surprised when I'm serious. I'm twenty years old.

TUZENBACH. The longing for work—oh my God, how I under-

stand it! I've never worked—never in my life. I was born in Petersburg—a cold, idle town—into a family which never knew work, or care. I remember when I used to come home from the Cadet Corps a footman would take off my boots. I was capricious; I just said and did whatever I felt like, under the admiring eye of my mother who was amazed that the whole world wasn't as charmed by me as she was. I was sheltered from all work. Will that world last? I doubt it . . . I doubt it. The hour has struck. Something vast is coming toward us. There's a powerful storm brewing, a good one, it's close by . . . it's coming soon. And then laziness, snobbery, the prejudice against work, and the morbid boredom of our society will all be swept away. I will work, and in twenty-five or thirty years, everyone will work. Everyone!

CHEBUTYKIN. Not me.

TUZENBACH. You don't count.

SOLYONY. In twenty-five years, thank God, there's a good chance you'll be dead, of apoplexy in two or three years, or else because I will lose patience with you, and lodge a bullet in your forehead, my angel. *(He takes from his pocket a small flask of perfume, and sprinkles some on his chest and hands.)*

CHEBUTYKIN. *(Laughing.)* It's true I've never done a damn thing. Since I left the university, I've never so much as lifted my little finger. I haven't read a single book. Only newspapers. *(He takes a newspaper from his pocket.)* Here. I read in the paper that a certain Dobrolyubov once existed. But what did he write? I have no idea . . . God knows . . . *(A knocking is heard from the floor below.)* There . . . they're calling me from downstairs, someone's waiting for me. I'll be right back. *(He hurries out, combing his beard.)*

IRINA. He has something up his sleeve again.

TUZENBACH. Yes. He had his poker-faced solemn look. It's probably a present for you.

IRINA. Oh no.

OLGA. It's awful. He's so extravagant.

MASHA. "By the curved seashore, a green oak tree, and around that oak, a chain of gold." *(She gets up, singing softly.)*

OLGA. You're not very cheerful today, Masha. *(Masha puts her hat on, still singing softly.)* Where are you going?

MASHA. Home.

IRINA. Why?

TUZENBACH. Leaving on a name day . . .

MASHA. Too bad. I'll be back tonight. Goodbye, my sweet. *(She*

kisses Irina.) Again: health and happiness. As many as thirty or forty officers used to come by on name days in father's time. It was exciting. There's only a person and a half here today . . . Too quiet, it's like a desert here. I'm leaving. I'm feeling too low. I'm not cheerful, don't mind me. *(She smiles through her tears.)* We'll talk later. Goodbye for now, my darling. I'm going off—it doesn't matter where.

IRINA. *(Displeased.)* You're so . . .

OLGA. *(Through her tears.)* I understand you, Masha.

SOLYONY. A man philosophizing results in philosophistication, or sophistry, if you will; but a woman, when she starts, or two do, then that results in . . . nothing.

MASHA. What do you mean, you dreadful man?

SOLYONY. Nothing at all. "Lying under a tree, he thought he had time to spare, / And looked up too late to see the oncoming bear." *(Pause.)*

MASHA. *(To Olga, angrily.)* And stop bawling! *(Anfisa and Ferapont enter. Ferapont carries a cake.)*

ANFISA. This way, little daddy. Come in, your feet are clean. *(To Irina.)* It's from the County Council, from Protopopov, from Mikhail Ivanich.

IRINA. Thank you. Tell him thank you. *(She takes the cake.)*

FERAPONT. What?

IRINA. *(Louder.)* Thank him.

OLGA. Nanny dear, give him some pirog. Go, Ferapont, you'll get some pirog.

FERAPONT. What?

ANFISA. Come, little daddy, come Ferapont Spiridonich. Come with me. *(Anfisa and Ferapont leave.)*

MASHA. I don't like that Protopopov, Mikhail Potapich or Ivanich, whatever his name is. Don't invite him.

IRINA. I didn't invite him.

MASHA. You were right. *(Chebutykin comes in, followed by a soldier carrying a silver samovar. There is a murmur of astonishment and disapproval.)*

OLGA. *(Covering her face with her hands.)* A samovar! How awful! *(She goes into the hall.)*

IRINA. Ivan Romanich, my dear, what have you done?

TUZENBACH. *(Laughing.)* What did I tell you?

MASHA. Ivan Romanich, you should be ashamed!

CHEBUTYKIN. My darlings, my good, sweet little angels. I have

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only you. You're what I hold dearest in the world. I'm nearly sixty, an old man, lonely and insignificant . . . The love I have for you is the only good thing in me. Without you I would have left this world long ago . . . *(To Irina.)* My darling, my child, I've known you since you were born, I carried you in my arms . . . I loved your poor mama . . .

IRINA. But why such expensive presents?

CHEBUTYKIN. *(Half-moved, half-angry.)* Such expensive presents . . . Leave me alone. *(To the soldier.)* Take the samovar into the hall. *(Mimicking her tone.)* Such expensive presents . . . *(The soldier takes the samovar into the hall.)*

ANFISA. *(Coming across the room.)* My dears, a colonel is here. We don't know him. He's taken off his coat, my darlings, he's coming. You be nice to him, Irinushka, be very polite. *(As she leaves.)* And it's time for lunch . . . Lord . . .

TUZENBACH. It must be Vershinin. *(Vershinin enters.)* Lieutenant Colonel Vershinin!

VERSHININ. *(To Masha and Irina.)* May I present myself: Vershinin. I am very, very happy to be here at last. My, how you've grown. My!

IRINA. Won't you sit down? We're very pleased to meet . . .

VERSHININ. *(Cheerfully.)* I'm so glad to be here, I'm so glad. There are three of you, aren't there? Three sisters? I remember three little girls. I have no memory of their faces, but I know for sure that your father, Colonel Prozorov, had three little girls. I saw them with my own eyes. How time flies! My, how it flies.

TUZENBACH. Alexander Ignatevich is from Moscow.

IRINA. From Moscow? You come from Moscow?

VERSHININ. Yes, of course. When your father was a battery commander, I was an officer in the same brigade. *(To Masha.)* Hmm, it seems to me I recognize you, a little.

MASHA. I don't recognize you at all.

IRINA. Olya! Olya! Olya, come quickly! *(Olga comes from the hall.)* Colonel Vershinin is from Moscow!

VERSHININ. So you're Olga Sergeevna, the eldest. And you, Maria . . . and you, Irina, the youngest . . .

OLGA. And you are from Moscow?

VERSHININ. Yes. I studied there, and that's where I started my military service. I lived there rather a long time, until finally I was appointed battery commander, here, and here I am, as you can see. To tell you the truth, I really don't remember you very well; I

only remember that you were three sisters. But I do have a very clear memory of your father. If I close my eyes I can see his face. I often visited your house in Moscow

OLGA. And I thought I remembered everyone

VERSHININ. My name is Alexander Ignatevich

IRINA. Alexander Ignatevich . . . from Moscow! What a surprise!

OLGA. You know, we're going back.

IRINA. We're thinking of being there in the fall . . . it's our city, we were born there . . . in Old Basmanny Street. (*They both laugh with pleasure.*)

MASHA. What a surprise to meet a fellow Muscovite! (*Excitedly.*)

Yes! Now, wait a minute! I have it! You remember, Olya, we called him "the lovesick major." You were a lieutenant, and in love, so to tease you, we called you a major, God knows why.

VERSHININ. (*Laughing.*) That's right, that's right, the lovesick major . . . It's true . . .

MASHA. You had only a moustache then . . . Oh, how you've aged. (*Through tears.*) How you've aged.

VERSHININ. Yes, yes, the lovesick major was young, and in love. It's not the same now.

OLGA. But you don't have a single gray hair. You've aged, but you're not old yet.

VERSHININ. Yes, but . . . still, I'm forty-two now. I'm in my forty-third year. Has it been a long time since you left Moscow?

IRINA. Eleven years. Why are you crying, Masha, you silly? . . . (*Through tears.*) Now I'm starting . . .

MASHA. It's nothing. Where did you live?

VERSHININ. Old Basmanny Street.

OLGA. So did we!

VERSHININ. Later I lived on German Street. And from there I used to walk to the Red Barracks. I had to pass over a gloomy bridge. When I was alone crossing that bridge, just to hear the water under it made me sad. (*Pause.*) But here there's a river that's so big, so abundant: a marvelous river . . .

OLGA. Yes, but it's cold here, and it's full of mosquitoes.

VERSHININ. Come, it's a very healthy climate, very good, a Slavic climate. There's the forest, the river, and the birches. The sweet, modest birches, my favorite trees. Living is good here. It is curious, of course, that the station is twelve miles from the town, and that nobody knows why.

SOLYONY. I do. (*They all look at him.*) If the station were closer, it wouldn't be farther, and since it's farther, it's not closer. (*An embarrassed silence.*)

TUZENBACH. Vasily Vasilevich, what a joker.

OLGA. Now I recognize you. I remember you.

VERSHININ. I knew your mother.

CHEBUTYKIN. She was so very good, God rest her soul.

IRINA. Mama is buried in Moscow.

OLGA. At the Cemetery of the New Virgins.

MASHA. And to think that I'm already beginning to forget her face. No one will remember us either. We'll all be forgotten.

VERSHININ. Yes . . . Forgotten . . . That's our fate, and there's nothing we can do about it. The day will come when everything which seems essential to us now will be forgotten, or seem futile. (*A pause.*) So strange . . . we can't possibly know today what will seem great and serious in the future, and what will seem ridiculous. It's true, isn't it, that the discoveries of Copernicus, or, let's say, Columbus, seemed useless and laughable in their day while some empty nonsense, written by an idiot, seemed true. Maybe what we accept as good without question in our time will some day seem strange, stupid, dishonest, or maybe even . . . bad.

TUZENBACH. Who knows? Maybe they'll say this was a great time, and they'll speak of us with respect. After all, there are no more tortures, no executions, no invasions, although so much suffering still!

SOLYONY. (*In falsetto, as if calling little birds to feed.*) Here, tsik . . . tsik, tsik, tsik, tsik . . . No grain for the baron, just let him philosophize.

TUZENBACH. Vasily Vasilevich, will you kindly leave me alone . . . (*He changes seats.*) You're beginning to annoy me.

SOLYONY. (*Falsetto.*) Here, tsik . . . tsik, tsik, tsik, tsik . . .

TUZENBACH. The kind of suffering we have today—although God knows we have enough of it—proves that society has already reached a certain level of morality.

VERSHININ. Yes, yes, of course . . .

CHEBUTYKIN. Baron, you've just said that our time will be called great; still, the people seem very small . . . (*He gets up.*) Look how small I am, for instance. You're just saying that our time is great to console me. (*Offstage we hear a violin.*)

MASHA. That's Andrei, our brother, playing.

IRINA. Andrei is our intellectual. He'll probably be a university professor. Papa was a military man, but his son chose a university career.

MASHA. Just as Papa hoped.

OLGA. We've teased him a lot today. I think he's a little bit in love.

IRINA. She's from around here. No doubt we'll have the pleasure of her company today.

MASHA. And how she dresses, my God. Her clothes aren't ugly or unfashionable, they're just pathetic: a strange skirt, loud and yellow, with a ridiculous fringe, and a red blouse! . . . And her cheeks: shiny with rouge. Andrei can't be in love with her, it's impossible, he has taste, after all. He just wants to tease us. Yesterday I was told she was going to marry Protopopov, the president of the County Council. That's good. *(She turns toward the door and calls.)* Andrei! Come! Come here, darling, just for a minute!

(Andrei enters.)

ENTER FROM DSR

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OLGA. Here's my brother, Andrei Sergeevich.

VERSHININ. Vershinin.

ANDREI. Prozorov. *(He wipes the sweat from his face.)* You are the new battery commander?

OLGA. Can you believe it? Alexander Ignatevich is from Moscow . . .

ANDREI. Really? Then I congratulate you. Now my little sisters will allow you no peace.

VERSHININ. It's I who have already succeeded in boring them.

IRINA. Look at the little frame Andrei gave me today. *(She shows him the frame.)* He made it himself.

VERSHININ. *(Looking at the frame and not knowing what to say.)* Yes . . . it's a . . . frame.

IRINA. And that one over there on the piano. He made it, too. *(Andrei waves his hand modestly, moving off.)* He's a scholar, he plays the violin, he makes all sorts of little things out of wood. He can do anything? Andrei, don't go away. You're always leaving. Come here! *(Masha and Irina take him by the arm and bring him back, laughing.)*

MASHA. Come here, come on.

ANDREI. Will you leave me alone, please.

MASHA. How funny he is. When we used to call Alexander Ignatevich "the lovesick major," he was never angry.

VERSHININ. Never.

MASHA. Well I'm going to call you: "the lovesick violinist."

BEGIN
TO
LEAVE

IRINA. Or the lovesick professor! . . .

OLGA. He's in love! Andryusha is in love!

IRINA. (*Applauding.*) Bravo! Bravo! Again! Andryusha is in love!

CHEBUTYKIN. (*Comes up behind Andrei and puts both arms around his waist.*) Love, we are only made for love. (*He bursts out laughing; he has not let go his newspaper.*)

ANDREI. Come on, come on now, that's enough. (*He wipes his face.*) I didn't sleep all night, and I really don't feel very well. I read until four in the morning. When I finally went to bed, I couldn't sleep, thinking of so many things. And then dawn is early now. I was invaded by sunlight. During the summer, since I'm staying here, I intend to translate a book from the English.

VERSHININ. You know English?

ANDREI. Yes. Our father, God rest his soul, made us learn many things. Strange as it seems, I have to confess that since a year ago when he died, I've started to become fat; it's as if my body had been let out of a corset. It's thanks to my father that my sisters and I know French, German, and English; Irina even knows Italian. But what work, to learn all that!

MASHA. To know three languages in a town like this is a luxury, like an absurd extra growth, a sixth finger. We know many useless things . . .

VERSHININ. What a funny idea, (*He laughs.*) knowing many useless things. An intelligent and educated being is never superfluous wherever he may be, even in a sad and gloomy town like this. Even admitting that there are only three beings like yourselves among the hundred thousand inhabitants of this vulgar and backward place . . . and that you can't conquer the shadowy masses surrounding you, that little by little you'll yield, you'll be lost in the enormous crowd—life will suffocate you—still, you won't disappear without leaving traces. After you, six beings of your kind may spring up, then twelve, and so on, until people like you become the majority. In two or three hundred years life on earth will be indescribably beautiful, astonishing. That must be what we're going toward; man needs such a life. And he must sense it coming, wait for it, dream about it, prepare himself, and so for that purpose it's important that he must see more, be more educated than his father and his grandfather. (*He laughs.*) And you complain about knowing too much! . . .

MASHA. (*Taking off her hat.*) I'm staying to lunch.

BE DS
FOR →

—USE
WINDOW?

—SIT SL
SIDE OF
SOFA.

IRINA. (*With a sigh.*) Really, all that should be written down. (*Andrei has discreetly left.*)

TUZENBACH. You say that in many years life will be wonderful and beautiful. All right. But to take part in that life now, even from far off, we must prepare ourselves, we must work.

VERSHININ. (*Getting up.*) Yes . . . well . . . so many flowers . . . (*Glancing around.*) . . . what beautiful rooms! I envy you. I've dragged around my entire life in little rooms with two chairs, a couch, and smokey chimneys. Flowers like this are what I've always missed. (*He rubs his hands together.*) Ah, well . . .

TUZENBACH. Yes, we must work. You're probably thinking what a sentimental German he is. But I'm Russian, word of honor; I don't even speak German. My father is orthodox. (*Pause.*)

VERSHININ. (*Pacing.*) I often say to myself: what if we could start our lives again, and this time with consciousness—if this life that we're living now were, so to speak, only a first draft, and the other, the clean copy. I think each one of us would try not to repeat himself, or at the very least we would create another atmosphere. Rooms like yours, for instance, flooded with light, filled with flowers . . . Me, I have a wife, two little girls; my wife is not in good health, and so forth and so on. Well, if I had it to do again, I wouldn't marry, I would not! (*Kulygin enters in a uniform coat of a high school teacher.*)

KULYGIN. (*Coming up to Irina.*) My dear sister, permit me to congratulate you, and to present my sincere and cordial wishes for good health and for anything that a young girl of your age might desire. And also to offer you this little book. (*He holds out a book to her.*) It is the history of the past fifty years of our high school. An unimportant book that I wrote when I had nothing else to do, but read it anyway. Hello everyone! (*To Vershinin.*) Kulygin, high school professor. (*To Irina.*) You will find in it the list of all those who have completed their studies in our high school for the past fifty years. *Feci, quod potui, faciant meliora potentes* . . . (*He kisses Masha.*)

IRINA. But you already gave it to me, for Easter.

KULYGIN. (*Laughing.*) Really? In that case, give it back to me, or no, better yet, give it to the Colonel. Here, Colonel, you'll read it when you have nothing else to do.

VERSHININ. I thank you. (*He gets ready to go.*) I am extremely happy to have met you . . .

OLGA. You're leaving? Oh no! No!

IRINA. You'll stay to lunch. Stay, please.

OLGA. Please do stay!

VERSHININ. (*Bowing.*) It seems I dropped in on you on a name day. Forgive me, I didn't know, I haven't congratulated you . . . (*He follows Olga into the hall.*)

KULYGIN. Today, my friends, is Sunday, day of rest, therefore let us rest, let us amuse ourselves, each one according to his age and his station. During the summer it'll be necessary to take up the rugs, and to put them in mothballs until winter . . . The Romans enjoyed good health, because they knew how to work and also how to rest: *mens sana in corpore sano*. Their lives followed precise forms. Our principal says: what is essential in life is form . . . that which loses its form is doomed . . . this is true in our daily lives as well. (*Laughing, he puts his arm around Masha's waist.*) Masha loves me. My wife loves me. And the curtains go out with the rugs. Today I am cheerful . . . in a wonderful mood. Masha dear, at four we're going to the principal's house. There's to be a nature walk for the teachers and their families.

MASHA. I won't go.

KULYGIN. (*Vexed.*) Masha, why not?

MASHA. We'll talk about it later. (*With anger.*) Oh, all right, I'll go. Just leave me alone now, please. (*She moves off.*)

KULYGIN. And we'll spend the evening with the principal. Despite his ill health, our principal makes sociability his first duty. An excellent man, a luminous personality. Yesterday, after the meeting, he said to me: "I am tired, Fyodor Ilyich. I am tired." (*He looks at the clock, then consults his watch.*) Your clock is seven minutes fast. He said to me, "Yes, I am tired." (*A violin is being played Offstage.*)

OLGA. My friends, come and eat now, please. Lunch is ready. We're having pirog!

KULYGIN. Olga dear; dear, dear Olga! Yesterday I worked from morning until eleven o'clock at night, I was exhausted, but today, I'm happy. (*He goes into the hall.*) My dear Olga . . .

CHEBUTYKIN. (*Puts his newspaper into his pocket and combs his beard.*) We're having pirog? Perfect!

MASHA. (*To Chebutykin, severely.*) But watch out, there's to be no question of drinking today. Do you understand me? It doesn't do you any good.

CHEBUTYKIN. Oh, come, come. That's all over. It's been two years since I've been drunk. (*Impatiently.*) And besides, dear little girl, what difference does it make?

MASHA. I don't care. I forbid you to drink. Forbid. (*With anger, but lowering her voice so that her husband doesn't hear.*) Another one of those evenings at the principal's! To hell with it!

TUZENBACH. If I were you, I wouldn't go . . . I simply wouldn't go.

CHEBUTYKIN. That's right, my sweet, don't go.

MASHA. Oh sure, don't go . . . What a damned, unbearable life . . . (*She goes into the hall.*)

CHEBUTYKIN. (*Following her.*) Come, come . . .

SOLYONY. (*Going into the hall.*) Here, tsik, tsik, tsik . . .

TUZENBACH. Enough, Vasily Vasilevich. Stop it. Now!

SOLYONY. Here, tsik, tsik, tsik . . .

KULYGIN. (*Cheerfully.*) To your health, colonel. I'm a professor, and here, in this house, I am at home. I am Masha's husband . . . Masha's a good woman, very good.

VERSHININ. I'd like to taste that dark vodka. (*He drinks.*) To your health. (*To Olga.*) I feel so at home here, so well. (*In the living room, Irina and Tuzenbach, alone.*)

IRINA. What a mood Masha's in today. She married him when she was eighteen, thinking he was so intelligent. She doesn't think so now. He's kind, but as for being intelligent . . .

OLGA. (*Impatiently.*) Andrei, will you come now!

ANDREI. (*From Offstage.*) I'm coming. (*He comes in and goes toward the table.*)

TUZENBACH. What are you thinking about?

IRINA. Nothing much. I don't like your Solyony; he frightens me. Everything he says is nonsense.

TUZENBACH. He's a strange man. He is pitiful and irritating at once, mostly pitiful. Maybe the problem is he's shy. When we're alone, he's sometimes very intelligent, very pleasant, then when we're out in society he becomes rude and aggressive. Stay here while they're getting seated. Let me be near you. What are you thinking about? (*A pause.*) You're twenty, I'm not even thirty . . . So many years in front of us, a long line of days, each one filled with my love for you . . .

IRINA. Don't talk about love to me, Nicolai Lvovich.

TUZENBACH. (*Not listening to her.*) I have such a thirst for life,

ENTER FROM D.S.R.
+ CROSS U.S. SIT
AT S.R. END.
(EVENTUALLY)

for the struggle, for work, and that thirst is the same as my love for you, Irina, and then, too, as if on purpose, you're so beautiful, and life seems so beautiful . . . What are you thinking about?

IRINA. Life is beautiful, you say. Perhaps. But what if you're wrong? For us, for us three sisters, life hasn't been beautiful yet. It's stifled us, like a weed. You see . . . tears. No need for that. *(She quickly wipes her eyes, smiling.)* We must work, we have to work. If we're sad, if we see life darkly, it's because we're ignoring work. We were born from a line of people who had only contempt for it.

(Natalya Ivanovna enters; she is wearing a pink dress with a green belt.)

NATASHA. They're sitting down to lunch already . . . I'm late.

(She glances furtively in the mirror, fixes her hair.) My hair's not too bad— *(Seeing Irina.)* Dear Irina Sergeevna, all my congratulations!

(She kisses her effusively, prolongedly.) You have so many guests! I'm embarrassed. Hello, Baron. *(Olga comes back to the living room.)*

OLGA. Ah, here's Natàlya Ivànovna. Hello, dear. *(They kiss.)*

NATASHA. My congratulations. You have so many guests, it makes me feel timid . . .

OLGA. Come, come, they're only friends. *(Lowering her voice, alarmed.)* But, my dear, that green belt! It's not right.

NATASHA. Is it bad luck?

OLGA. No, but it doesn't go with . . . It looks odd . . .

NATASHA. *(In a teary voice.)* Oh, it's not really so green, it's rather a dull color . . . *(She follows Olga into the hall. Everyone sits at table; no one is left in the living room.)*

KULYGIN. Irina dear, I hope you will find yourself a good fiancé soon. It's time you were married!

CHEBUTYKIN. And you too, Natalya Ivanovna. I wish you a nice little fiancé.

KULYGIN. Natalya Ivanovna already has a nice little fiancé.

MASHA. Well, let's drink one down. Life is beautiful, to hell with tomorrow.

KULYGIN. C minus for manners.

VERSHININ. This is excellent. What did you put in it?

SOLYONY. Cockroaches.

IRINA. *(Tearfully.)* Igh, that's disgusting.

OLGA. For dinner we're having roast turkey and apple tart. I am home all day today. Thank God. And tonight. My friends, come back tonight . . .

VERSHININ. And I, may I come back too?

IRINA. Please do.

NATASHA. We don't stand on ceremony here.

CHEBUTYKIN. Love, we are only made for love. *(He laughs.)*

ANDREI. *(Angry.)* Stop. Gentlemen, aren't you tired of that yet?
(Fedotik and Rodé enter, carrying a large basket of flowers.)

FEDOTIK. Oh, they're already having lunch.

RODÉ. *(With a loud voice, mispronouncing his r's.)* They're having lunch. Oh yes, so they are.

FEDOTIK. Just a minute. *(He takes a photograph.)* That's one! Wait just another minute. *(He takes another photograph.)* That's two! Good, that's it! *(They take the basket and go into the hall, where they are greeted loudly.)*

RODÉ. *(In a loud voice.)* Congratulations, all the best! It's delicious out today, marvelous! I walked all morning with my students. I'm teaching them gymnastics.

FEDOTIK. You can move, Irina Sergeevna, you can. *(He takes a photograph.)* You look very pretty today. *(He takes a spinning top out of his pocket.)* This top, by the way . . . has a remarkable sound . . .

IRINA. Oh, how pretty!

MASHA. "By the curved seashore, a green oak tree, and around that oak, a chain of gold . . ." *(Plaintively.)* Why do I keep saying that? It's been going through my mind since this morning.

KULYGIN. We're thirteen at table!

RODÉ. *(Very loud.)* Might you be given to superstition, gentlemen?

KULYGIN. If we are thirteen at table, it's because we have lovers among us. Might you be one of them, Ivan Romanich?
(Laughter.)

CHEBUTYKIN. I? I am an old sinner. But why does Natalya Ivanovna look so disturbed? Is there something I don't understand? *(General laughter. Natalya leaves the table and runs into the living room. Andrei follows her.)*

ANDREI. Come, don't pay any attention. Wait . . . Stop, please . . .

NATASHA. I'm ashamed. I don't know what's the matter with me, and they're laughing at me. I know it's not proper to leave the table like that . . . but I don't know . . . I can't . . . *(She covers her face with her hands.)*

ANDREI. My darling, please, be calm. They're only joking, I promise you, they have only the best of intentions. My dear, my

RISE, X DC TO
NATASHA.

sweet, they're good people, they have kind hearts, they love us very much. Come over here by the window, where they can't see us. *(He looks around him.)* X SR

NATASHA. I'm not used to going out into society.

ANDREI. Oh youth, wonderful youth. My little one, my baby, my sweet baby, be calm! Trust me . . . I'm feeling so happy, so full of love, full of . . . No, no, nobody can see us, nobody. Why, how have I come to love you so much, since when? Oh, I don't understand anything. My darling, you're so pure, so good, I love you, be my wife! I love you, I love you, as I've never . . . *(A kiss. Two officers enter, and seeing the couple embracing, they stop stupefied.)*

CURTAIN

①

ACT TWO 1-2 YRS LATER

Same setting. Eight o'clock at night. Offstage, from the street, we hear the barely perceptible sounds of an accordion. No light. Natalya Ivanovna enters in a dressing gown, a candle in her hand; she stops in front of the door which leads to Andrei's room.

BEGIN OFF
S.R.

NATASHA. What are you doing, Andryusha? Are you reading? No, it's nothing, I won't bother you . . . (She goes and opens another door, looks inside, and closes it again.) No light . . . (Andrei enters, a book in his hand.)

ANDREI. What is it, Natasha?

NATASHA. I'm checking to see that no candles have been left burning. At carnival time, servants lose their heads. We have to watch them very carefully to make sure nothing happens. Yesterday at midnight I went by the dining room. There was a candle still burning. I asked them who lit it. Of course none of them would say. (She puts the candle on the table.) What time is it? (Andrei looks at his watch.)

ANDREI. Eight-fifteen.

NATASHA. Olga and Irina aren't back yet. Always working so hard, poor lambs, Olga at the teacher's council, Irina at the telegraph office . . . (A sigh.) This morning I said to Irina, "Sweetheart, you have to take care of yourself." Of course she didn't listen to me. Eight-fifteen, you say? I'm afraid our little Bobik isn't feeling well. Why is he so cold? Yesterday he had a fever, today he's like an icicle. I'm frightened for him.

ANDREI. Now, Natasha, there's nothing wrong with the baby.

NATASHA. Still . . . it would be better to put him on a diet. Really, I'm frightened. And then I've been told the maskers are coming at nine. Do they have to come, Andryusha? Darling, it would be better if they didn't.

ANDREI. I don't know . . . it isn't up to me . . . they were invited.

NATASHA. This morning our little one woke up. He looked at me and he began to smile; that means he recognized me. "Hello, Bobik, hello, my little darling," I said. And you should've heard him laugh. Children understand absolutely everything.

Andryusha, I'll give orders that we won't receive the maskers, all right?

ANDREI. (*Hesitating.*) But . . . that's up to my sisters. They're in charge here.

NATASHA. I'll tell them too. They're so good. (*She starts to leave.*) We'll have yoghurt for dinner. The doctor said that if you want to lose weight you must eat only yoghurt. (*She stops.*) Bobik is so cold. His room is too chilly. What if we put him in another? At least until the warm weather? Irina's room, for example. It's not humid, it's very sunny, it would be perfect. I'll tell Irina in the meantime she can share Olga's room . . . Anyway, she's never home during the day. She only sleeps there . . . (*Pause.*) Andryusha . . . say something.

ANDREI. I was thinking about something else. Anyway, I have nothing to say.

NATASHA. But there was something I wanted to say . . . Oh yes: Ferapont is here from the Municipal council. He wants to see you.

ANDREI. (*Yawning.*) Tell him to come in. (*Natasha goes out. Andrei reads by the light of the candle which Natasha has forgotten. Ferapont comes in. He wears an old overcoat, the collar turned up, and a band around his ears.*) Hello, my friend. What's new?

FERAPONT. The president has sent you a book, and some papers. Here. (*He holds out a book and some papers to Andrei.*)

ANDREI. Thank you. Good. But why are you so late? It's past eight.

FERAPONT. What?

ANDREI. (*Raising his voice.*) I said: you're late. It's past eight.

FERAPONT. That's true. When I came it was still light out. But they wouldn't let me up. They said, "The master is busy." Well, if he's busy, then he's busy—I'm in no rush. (*Thinking that Andrei has asked him something.*) What?

ANDREI. No, nothing. (*He looks at the book.*) Tomorrow is Friday. The council doesn't meet. But I'll come anyway . . . it'll keep me busy. I can't stay home; it's too boring. (*Pause.*) Well, old Granddad, life certainly changes. It plays tricks on us. Today, idly, out of boredom, I picked up this book: old university courses. Made me want to laugh . . . My God, I'm Secretary to the County Council, the council of which Protopopov is the president. I'm the secretary, and the best I can hope for is to become a member. Me, a member of the County Council. I who dream every night that I

am a professor at the University of Moscow, a famous scholar of whom Russia can be proud.

FERAPONT. That may be . . . I can't hear very well.

ANDREI. If you heard any better, I might not talk to you. I have to talk to someone. My wife doesn't understand me, and I'm afraid of my sisters, yes, I'm afraid they'll laugh at me, they'll make me feel ashamed. I don't drink and I don't like cafes, but, my friend, what a pleasure it would be to spend only one hour at Testov's, or at the Great Muscovite, in Moscow.

FERAPONT. I hear—a contractor told the council that in Moscow some merchants ate pancakes. One merchant ate forty of them. He died from it. Forty, maybe fifty, I don't remember.

ANDREI. In Moscow you sit in a huge restaurant, nobody knows you and you don't know anybody, but you don't feel isolated. Whereas here you know everyone and everyone knows you, but you feel like a stranger . . . and alone.

FERAPONT. What? *(A pause.)* The same contractor also said, only maybe he was lying, that they stretched a cable across all of Moscow.

ANDREI. What for?

FERAPONT. I don't know. That's just what the contractor said.

ANDREI. Nonsense. *(He reads the book.)* Have you ever been to Moscow?

FERAPONT. *(After a silence.)* No. Never. It's not God's will. *(Pause.)* May I go now?

ANDREI. Yes. You may. Take care. *(Ferapont goes out.)* Take care now. *(He reads.)* Come tomorrow morning, you'll take back these papers . . . ~~Somehow~~ . . . *(A pause.)* Well . . . he's gone. *(The doorbell rings.)* So . . . that's how it is. *(He stretches and goes into his room without hurrying. Offstage a nurse sings a lullabye to put the child to sleep.)* *Masha and Vershinin enter. Whilst they're speaking a maid lights a lamp and some candles.)*

MASHA. I don't know. *(Pause.)* Of course it's true, habit may have something to do with it. After my father died, for example, it seemed strange not to have any orderlies around. Still, even aside from that, although it may be different in other places, it seems clear that here the best people, the most noble, the best educated people are the military.

VERSHININ. I'm so thirsty. I'd be glad for some tea.

MASHA. *(Glancing at her watch.)* They'll bring it soon. I was married at eighteen. I was afraid of my husband. He was a teacher and

I had just finished school, so he seemed to me to be terribly important: learned and intelligent. Now, unfortunately, that's no longer the case.

VERSHININ. Yes . . . of course.

MASHA. And I don't even mean my husband, I'm used to him, but so many of the civilians around here are coarse, dry, and uneducated. Coarseness upsets me; I find it insulting. I suffer when I experience a lack of refinement, and tenderness, and kindness. And when I have the misfortune to find myself among teachers, my husband's colleagues, I'm miserable.

VERSHININ. Yes . . . but I think, you see, that civilians and officers . . . in this city at least . . . are all the same. It's all the same. Just listen to the intellectuals here—civilian or military, everything exasperates them: their wives, their homes, their land, their horses, everything . . . The Russian has a natural tendency to exalt thinking and ideals, but why does he remain so mediocre in his life? Why, hmmm?

MASHA. Why?

VERSHININ. Why can't he stand his children or his wife? Why can't his wife and children stand him?

MASHA. You're depressed today.

VERSHININ. That's possible. I haven't had any dinner. I haven't eaten anything since this morning. One of my daughters is sick. When my little ones are sick I become anxious . . . and filled with remorse for having given them such a mother. Oh, if you could only have heard her today. She has no common sense. We started fighting at seven in the morning; by nine I left, slamming the door. (*A pause.*) I never talk about it, it's strange, I only complain to you. (*He kisses her hand.*) Don't be angry at me. I have only you, only you in the world . . . (*Pause.*)

MASHA. What a noise in the stove! A little before Father's death it made that same noise. Exactly the same!

VERSHININ. Are you superstitious?

MASHA. Yes.

VERSHININ. That's strange. (*He kisses her hand.*) You're a wonderful woman, magnificent. Just wonderful, magnificent! It's dark in here, but I see your eyes shining.

MASHA. (*Changing seats.*) It's lighter over here.

VERSHININ. I love, I love, I love . . . I love your eyes, your way of moving; I dream about you . . . you're wonderful, magnificent . . .

MASHA. (*Laughing softly.*) When you talk to me like that it makes me want to laugh, and it frightens me . . . Stop, please stop. (*In a low voice.*) No, say it, I don't care . . . (*She covers her face with her hands.*) Nothing makes any difference to me. Someone's coming. Talk about something else . . . [*Irina and Tuzenbach enter from the hall.*]

TUZENBACH. I have a triple name. I am the Baron Tuzenbach-Krone-Altschauer. But I'm Russian, orthodox, just like you. There's nothing German about me . . . except perhaps my patience . . . and the stubbornness with which I continue to annoy you. I walk you home every night.

IRINA. I'm so tired.

TUZENBACH. Every night I come and get you at the telegraph office, and I walk you home. I'll do so for ten or twenty years, until you chase me away— (*Seeing Masha and Vershinin, joyously.*) it's you. Good evening.

IRINA. Home at last! (*To Masha.*) A little while ago a lady came to send a telegram to her brother in Saratov. She wanted to tell him that her son died today. She couldn't remember his address. So we just sent it to Saratov. Just like that. She was crying. And I was rude to her for no reason at all. I told her not to waste my time. It was so stupid . . . Are the maskers coming tonight?

MASHA. Yes.

IRINA. (*Falls into an armchair.*) Must rest. Tired.

TUZENBACH. (*Smiling.*) When you come home from work, you seem so small, an unhappy child . . . (*A pause.*)

IRINA. Tired. I don't like the telegraph office, I don't.

MASHA. You've lost weight . . . (*She gives a little whistle.*) And you look younger, you look like a street urchin.

TUZENBACH. It's her hair.

IRINA. I'll have to try to find some other work, this is no good for me. It lacks everything I've ever dreamed of . . . It's without poetry and without spirit. (*Someone knocks on the floor.*) It's the doctor. (*To Tuzenbach.*) Knock back for me, please . . . I can't any more . . . tired . . . (*Tuzenbach knocks on the floor.*) He's coming now. We should do something. Yesterday the doctor and Andrei played again, and lost. It seems Andrei lost two hundred roubles.

MASHA. (*Indifferently.*) So what can we do about it?

IRINA. He lost two weeks ago, and in December he lost. If only he would lose everything, very fast, then we could leave. My God,

I dream of Moscow every night, I'm going crazy. *(She laughs.)*
We're leaving in June. We still have February, March, April,
May . . . almost half a year.

MASHA. Let's hope Natasha doesn't find out he lost.

IRINA. I don't think she cares at all. *(Chebutykin enters. He has just woken up—he naps after dinner; he's combing his beard, he sits at the table in the hall and pulls a newspaper out of his pocket.)*

MASHA. There he is. Has he paid his rent?

IRINA. *(Laughing.)* No, not a kopek for eight months. He's probably forgotten.

MASHA. *(Laughing.)* How important he looks! *(General laughter. Pause.)*

IRINA. Why aren't you saying anything, Alexander Ignatevich?

VERSHININ. I don't know. I'd like some tea. I'd give half my life for a glass of tea! I've had nothing since this morning.

CHEBUTYKIN. Irina Sergeevna!

IRINA. What do you want?

CHEBUTYKIN. Come over here. *(Irina goes to him and sits at the table.)* I can't do anything without you. *(Irina lays out the cards for a game of Patience.)*

VERSHININ. Well, if we're not getting any tea, at least let's talk.

MASHA. What about?

VERSHININ. Let's dream together . . . for instance, what will life be like in two or three hundred years.

TUZENBACH. Well, maybe people will fly off in balloons, the cut of jackets will change, a sixth sense will be discovered, maybe even developed, I don't know, but life will be the same: difficult, full of unknowns . . . and happy. And in a thousand years, just as he does today, man will go around sighing: "Oh, how difficult it is to be alive!" And he'll still be frightened of death, he won't want to die.

VERSHININ. *(After having thought.)* How to explain to you? It seems to me that everything is going to change little by little; the transformation is happening, in fact, before our eyes. In two or three hundred years, in a thousand years maybe, it doesn't matter how long, a new way of living will be established, a happy one. Of course we won't be there to see it, but it's why we live, it's why we work, it's what we suffer for. We're the ones who're creating it after all. In fact, that's the only purpose of our existence, and the only happiness we can know is to work for that goal. *(Masha laughs softly.)*

TUZENBACH. Why are you laughing?

MASHA. I don't know. I've been laughing since this morning.

VERSHININ. I studied the same subjects you did; I wasn't one of those who went to the military academy. I read a lot—although I don't know how to choose what I read; maybe I should be reading something entirely else—still, the more I live, the more I want to know. My hair is getting white, soon I'll be old, and I know so little, so very little. But I believe I know the essential, and that I know it for sure. I'd like to show you how there isn't, how there can't be, any happiness for us. We'll never know happiness . . . For us there can be only work, nothing but work; happiness is for our distant descendants . . . *(A pause.)* Not for me, but for my children's children, for their children. *(Fedotik and Rodé appear in the hall; they sit and start to sing softly, accompanying themselves on the guitar.)*

TUZENBACH. So, according to you, we can't even dream of happiness. But what if I am happy!

VERSHININ. No.

TUZENBACH. *(Throwing up his hands and laughing.)* Clearly we don't understand each other. How can I convince you . . . ? *(Masha laughs softly. He points at her.)* Well, laugh if you want to. *(To Vershinin.)* Life will be the same not only in two or three hundred years, but in a million; life doesn't change, it's immutable. It conforms to its own laws. Those laws don't concern us, and we can't know anything about them anyway. Migrant birds, cranes for instance, have to fly, and whatever sublime or insignificant thoughts they may have, they have to fly, they fly on. They don't know why, or where they're going. They fly and they will fly, and if they have philosophers among them, they can philosophize if they want to, so long as they fly . . .

MASHA. Well anyway, what does that mean, all that?

TUZENBACH. Mean . . . Look, it's snowing. What does that mean? *(A pause.)*

MASHA. It seems to me that man must have a faith, or at least look for one, or his life is completely empty . . . If we live and we don't know why cranes fly, or why children are born, or why there are stars in the sky . . . then—we have to know why we live, otherwise it's all meaningless, it's silly. *(A pause.)*

VERSHININ. Still, it is sad that youth is over.

MASHA. As Gogol says, "Ladies and gentlemen, to live in this world is boring."

TUZENBACH. And as I say, ladies and gentlemen, to win an argument with you is impossible. That's enough, I give up.

CHEBUTYKIN. (*Reading a newspaper.*) Balzac was married in Berdichev. (*Irina hums softly.*) That's something to write down. (*He makes a note in his notebook.*) Balzac was married in Berdichev. (*He goes back to his reading.*)

IRINA. (*Completing a game of Patience, dreamily.*) Balzac was married in Berdichev.

TUZENBACH. The die is cast. Did you know, Maria Sergeevna: I've handed in my resignation.

MASHA. So I've heard. I'm not cheering. I don't like civilians.

TUZENBACH. Too bad . . . (*He gets up.*) I don't look like a soldier anyway, do I? I'm not handsome. Well, so what . . . I'm going to work. Even if it's only for one day in my life, I'm going to work to the point of crumbling with fatigue when I get home at night; I'll fall asleep right then and there. (*He goes toward the hall.*) Workers must sleep very soundly!

FEDOTIK. (*To Irina.*) A while ago on Moscow Street at Pyzhikov's I bought you some colored pencils. And this little knife . . .

IRINA. You still treat me like a child, but I'm grown up now . . . (*She takes the pencils and the knife, joyously.*) How pretty!

FEDOTIK. I bought myself this knife . . . look . . . one blade, two, a third . . . this is for cleaning your ears . . . little scissors, a nail file . . .

RODÉ. (*In a loud voice.*) Doctor, how old are you?

CHEBUTYKIN. Me? Thirty-two. (*Laughter.*)

FEDOTIK. I'll teach you a different solitaire. (*He spreads out the cards. They bring in the samovar; Anfisa settles herself next to it; then Natasha arrives and fusses around the table; Solyony enters; after having greeted everyone, he sits at the table.*)

VERSHININ. There's such a wind today.

MASHA. I'm tired of winter. I've forgotten what summer's like.

IRINA. This is going to work out, I can see it! We're going to Moscow!

FEDOTIK. No you're not. (*He laughs.*) See—the eight is covering the two of spades. It won't work out.

CHEBUTYKIN. (*Reading.*) Many cases of smallpox are reported in Tsitsikar.

ANFISA. (*Approaching Masha.*) Come have some tea, Masha my little one. (*To Vershinin.*) You too, your honor. Excuse me, I've forgotten your name.

MASHA. Bring the tea here, Nanny dear. I won't go over there.

IRINA. Nanny dear!

ANFISA. Coming-g!

NATASHA. (*To Solyony.*) Infants understand everything perfectly. "Hello," I said to my little Bobik. "Hel-lo, darling," I said to him. And he gave me one of those looks. I suppose you think that's just a mother talking? I assure you he's an exceptional child, he is.

SOLYONY. If that child were mine, I would roast him and eat him. (*He goes toward the living room, his glass of tea in his hand, and sits in a corner.*)

NATASHA. (*Covering her face with her hands.*) How crude!

MASHA. If I lived in Moscow I think I wouldn't care what the weather was like. A person who doesn't need to notice the weather must be happy.

VERSHININ. The other day I read the journal of a French minister, written in prison. He'd been sentenced for the Panama Affair. He talked with such ecstasy, with such passion, about the birds he saw through the window of his prison. Before, he'd never noticed birds. Now that he's free again, he's probably back to his old habits, and to hell with the birds. You'll be just like him; when you're living there you won't even see Moscow any more. There's no happiness for us. Happiness doesn't exist. We can only desire it.

TUZENBACH. (*He picks up a box from the table.*) Where are the bon-bons?

IRINA. Solyony ate them.

TUZENBACH. All of them?

ANFISA. (*Bringing the tea.*) A letter for you, your honor, dear.

VERSHININ. For me? (*He takes the letter.*) It's from my daughter . . . (*He reads.*) Yes, of course . . . again. Excuse me, Maria Sergeevna, I'll leave discreetly. I won't have any tea. (*He gets up, upset.*) It's the same old story . . .

MASHA. What is it? If I'm not being too—

VERSHININ. (*Lowering his voice.*) My wife has taken poison again. I have to go. I'll just slip away . . . How painful it all is. (*He kisses Masha's hand.*) My dear Masha . . . so sweet and good . . . I'll just slip out. (*He goes out.*)

ANFISA. Where . . . Where is he going? His tea is right here. Where's he going now, I—

MASHA. (*Angrily.*) Stop nagging! Can't you leave me alone? (*She goes with her cup of tea toward the big table.*) Tiresome old woman!

ANFISA. Why are you angry, my darling?

ANDREI'S VOICE. Anfisa!

ANFISA. (*Imitating him.*) Anfisa! . . . He wouldn't move a muscle, that one . . .

MASHA. (*In the hall, angrily.*) Make a little room, please. (*She upsets the cards on the table.*) You're always playing cards! Why don't you drink your tea!?

IRINA. You're being mean, Mashka.

MASHA. Well then, don't talk to me. Leave me alone.

CHEBUTYKIN. (*Laughing.*) Just leave her alone, leave her alone . . .

MASHA. And you, at sixty you're nothing but a child talking nonsense about God knows what.

NATASHA. (*Sighing.*) Masha, such expressions! With your looks, I can tell you frankly, my dear, you'd go far in Society, but not with that manner of speaking. *Pardonnez-moi, Marie, je vous en prie, mais vous avez des manières un peu grossières.*

TUZENBACH. (*Stifling a laugh.*) I would like some . . . um . . . um . . . I think there's some cognac.

NATASHA. *Il paraît que mon Bobik ne dort déjà pas.* He's awake. My little Bobik is not feeling very well today. I am going to see him now. Excuse me . . . (*She goes out.*)

IRINA. And Alexander Ignatevich, where's he gone?

MASHA. Home. Strange things are happening with his wife again.

TUZENBACH. (*He goes to join Solyony, a small decanter of cognac in his hand.*) Here you are, always alone in your corner, ruminating on God knows what. Do you want to make peace? Let's have some cognac. (*They drink.*) I suppose I'll be at the piano all night, playing whatever they want . . . It doesn't matter, God knows.

SOLYONY. Why should we make peace? Are we having an argument?

TUZENBACH. It seems to me there's been something going on between us. You must admit, you have a strange personality.

SOLYONY. (*He recites.*) "I am a strange one, who is not? Do not be angry at me, Aleko."

TUZENBACH. What's Aleko got to do with it?

SOLYONY. When I'm alone with someone I'm all right, I'm just like everyone else, but in a group I get depressed, timid . . . and I say whatever comes into my mind. Still, I'm more honest, and more honorable, than most. And I can prove it.

TUZENBACH. I do have something against you when we're out

in society; you annoy me continually. But I like you. God knows why. I want to get drunk today. And so what? Drink up!

SOLYONY. Drink up! *(They drink.)* I've never had anything against you personally, Baron, but I'm told I have the character of Lermontov. *(Lowering his voice.)* I'm told I even look like him . . . *(He takes a perfume vial from his pocket and sprinkles some perfume on his hands.)*

TUZENBACH. I've handed in my resignation. *Basta!* I hesitated for five years; now it's done. I'll work.

• SOLYONY. *(He recites.)* "Do not be angry at me, Aleko . . . forget, forget your dreams . . ." *(During their conversation Andrei enters noiselessly, carrying a book. He sits near a candle.)*

TUZENBACH. I'll work . . .

CHEBUTYKIN. *(Coming back to the living room with Irina.)* And then they treated us to a real Caucasian banquet: onion soup and chekhartma roast.

SOLYONY. Cheremsha isn't meat, it's a plant of the same genus as our onion.

CHEBUTYKIN. No, no, my angel. Chekhartma isn't made of onion, it's roast lamb.

SOLYONY. But I tell you: cheremsha is onion.

CHEBUTYKIN. And I repeat: chekhartma is roast lamb.

SOLYONY. Cheremsha is onion.

CHEBUTYKIN. Oh why argue with you? You've never even been to the Caucasus. You've never eaten chekhartma.

SOLYONY. No, because I hate it. Cheremsha smells of garlic.

ANDREI. *(Pleading.)* Enough, my friends! Please!

TUZENBACH. When are the maskers coming?

IRINA. They said at nine; it must be time.

TUZENBACH. *(Putting an arm around Andrei, singing.)* "My little porch, my little porch, my own little porch of mine . . ."

ANDREI. *(Dancing and singing.)* "My little porch, made of wood, made of wood."

CHEBUTYKIN. "My little porch, shingled all with maple wood." *(Laughter.)*

TUZENBACH. *(He kisses Andrei.)* What the hell, drink up. Andryusha, let's drink to you, my darling. I'll follow you to Moscow, Andryusha, to the university.

SOLYONY. Which one? There are two universities in Moscow.

ANDREI. No, only one.

SOLYONY. I tell you there are two.

ENTER FROM
SR + SIT IN
CHAIR BY
DOOR.

RISE + X
DSL TO
GROUP.

ANDREI. Three then if you like. The more, the merrier.

SOLYONY. There are two universities in Moscow! (*Murmuring and hissing.*) There are two universities in Moscow. The old one and the new one. But of course if you don't want to listen to me, if what I'm saying is irritating you, I can keep quiet. I can even leave. (*He goes out by one of the doors.*)

TUZENBACH. Bravo, bravo! (*He laughs.*) Start, my friends. I am sitting down to the piano. Funny fellow, that Solyony. (*He plays a waltz.*)

MASHA. (*Waltzing alone.*) The baron is drunk, the baron is drunk, the baron is drunk! (*Natasha enters.*)

NATASHA. (*To Chebutykin.*) Ivan Romanich! (*She talks into his ear, then goes out noiselessly. Chebutykin touches Tuzenbach's shoulder and whispers to him.*)

IRINA. What is it?

CHEBUTYKIN. It's time for us to leave. Take care of yourselves.

TUZENBACH. Good night, it's time to go.

IRINA. What's happened . . . and what about the maskers? . . .

ANDREI. (*Embarrassed.*) There won't be any maskers. You see, my dear, Natasha says that Bobik isn't feeling well, so . . . Anyway, I don't know anything about it, and it doesn't matter to me. —→ GO EXIT SR.

IRINA. (*Shrugging her shoulders.*) Bobik isn't well!

MASHA. Too bad for us! We're driven out, we leave. (*To Irina.*) It's not Bobik who's sick, it's her. Look! (*She taps her forehead with her finger.*) Little petty bourgeois b—! . . . (*Andrei goes into his room through the door, R. Chebutykin follows him. The others say goodbye in the hall.*)

FEDOTIK. That's too bad! I was counting on spending the evening here but, of course, if the child is sick . . . I'll bring him some toys tomorrow.

RODÉ. (*In a loud voice.*) I took a nap on purpose after dinner. I thought we were going to dance all night. And now it's only nine o'clock!

MASHA. Come out into the street. We'll talk there, and decide what to do. (*Offstage we hear "goodbye," and "take care of yourself," and Tuzenbach's gay laugh. All are gone. Anfisa and the maid clear the table and put out the lights. We hear the wet nurse singing.*) Andrei enters quietly, dressed to go out. Chebutykin is talking to him.)

CHEBUTYKIN. I had no time to get married; life went by like a flash, and of course I loved your mother madly, but she was already married.

ENTER
FROM
SR DOOR.

6

ANDREI. One mustn't get married. One must not get married *MOVE*
because it's boring.

CHEBUTYKIN. That may be true, but loneliness! No matter how
you turn it, loneliness is atrocious, my dove. Although, in the
end . . . of course, it's all the same.

ANDREI. Let's leave quickly. *→ MOVE*

CHEBUTYKIN. Why hurry? We have time.

ANDREI. I'm afraid my wife will stop me from going out. *STAY*

CHEBUTYKIN. Ah! I see.

ANDREI. Tonight I won't gamble, I'll just look. I'm not feeling
well . . . What should I take for shortness of breath, Ivan
Romanich?

CHEBUTYKIN. What a question! Am I supposed to remember?
Well I don't, my dove. How should I know?

ANDREI. We'll go out through the kitchen. *(They go out. The bell
rings once, then again. Voices, laughter.) → EXIT THRU*

IRINA. *(Entering.)* What is it?

DSL Door.

ANFISA. *(Whispering.)* The maskers. *(The bell rings again.)*

IRINA. Nanny dear, tell them we're out. All of us. Ask them to
forgive us. *(Anfisa goes out. Irina paces, thinking. She is agitated. Sol-
yony enters.)*

SOLYONY. *(Surprised.)* No one? Where did they go?

IRINA. Home.

SOLYONY. Strange. Are you alone here?

IRINA. Yes. *(A pause.)* Goodbye.

SOLYONY. I behaved very badly before, I lacked tact. But you're
not like the others, you're good and pure, you see the truth.
You're the only one who can understand me. I love you, pro-
foundly, infinitely.

IRINA. Goodbye! Go.

SOLYONY. I can't live without you. *(He follows her.)* Oh, my hap-
piness! *(Through tears.)* Those incredible eyes, how marvelous they
are, astonishing, I've never seen anything like them . . .

IRINA. *(Coldly.)* That's enough, Vasily Vasilevich!

SOLYONY. For the first time I am speaking to you of my love,
and I feel like I'm not on earth any more, I'm on another planet.
(He rubs his forehead.) Oh well, never mind. Of course, you can't
force someone to love you. But I won't allow a successful
rival . . . Never! I swear by all that's holy: I'll kill any rival
. . . Oh, my beautiful one. *(Natasha crosses the stage carrying a
candle.)*

NATASHA. *(She half opens and looks through a door, then another,*

and passes in front of her husband's room.) Andrei's in his room. We'll let him read. Excuse me, Vasily Vasilevich, I didn't know you were here. I'm in my nightgown . . .

SOLYONY. So what! Goodbye. *(He goes out.)*

NATASHA. My poor little Irina, you look so tired! *(She kisses Irina.)* You should go to bed earlier.

IRINA. Is Bobik asleep?

NATASHA. Yes, asleep, but he's not well . . . By the way, dear, there's something I've been wanting to talk to you about, for a long time. But either you're not at home, or I'm too busy . . . Bobik's room is too cold, too damp. Yours would be better for him. And, Darling, you can stay with Olya-dear in the meantime.

IRINA. *(Who doesn't understand.)* Where? *(The little bells of a troika are heard stopping in front of the house.)*

NATASHA. You'll share Olya's room, and Bobik will be in yours. He's so adorable! Today I said to him, "You're mine, Bobik! You're mine!" And he looked at me with those pretty little eyes. *(The bell rings.)* It's probably Olga. She's coming in so late! *(The maid approaches Natasha and speaks into her ear.)* Protopopov? What a funny fellow! It's Protopopov. He's come to ask me to go for a troika ride with him. *(She laughs.)* Men are so funny . . . *(The bell rings.)* Is someone here? What if I went for a fifteen minute ride? *(To the maid.)* Tell him I'm coming. *(The bell rings.)* The bell. It must be Olga. *(She goes out. The maid goes out too, running. Irina, in an armchair, thinks; Olga, Kulygin, and Vershinin enter.)*

KULYGIN. What's happening? I was told there was going to be a party here.

VERSHININ. How strange. I left barely half an hour ago. Maskers were expected.

IRINA. They all left.

KULYGIN. Masha too? Where's she gone? And Protopopov, why's he waiting downstairs with a troika? Who's he waiting for?

IRINA. Don't ask so many questions. I'm tired.

KULYGIN. My, aren't we touchy . . .

OLGA. The meeting just finished now. I'm dead tired. The head-mistress is sick, and I'm taking her place. My head, my head hurts, my head . . . *(She sits.)* Yesterday, gambling, Andrei lost two hundred roubles. The whole town is talking about it.

KULYGIN. Me too, the meeting tired me too. *(He sits down.)*

VERSHININ. My wife wanted to scare me. She almost poisoned

herself, but everything's all right now, I'm happy, I'm resting. So, we have to go? Too bad; I wish you a thousand good things. Say, Fyodor Ilyich, let's go somewhere, the two of us. I can't stay home, it's not possible! Come!

KULYGIN. I'm too tired, I can't go anywhere. (*He gets up.*) Tired! Has my wife gone home?

IRINA. Probably.

KULYGIN. (*Kissing Irina's hand.*) Goodbye. Tomorrow and the day after, I can rest all day. Good night. (*He gets ready to leave.*) I have such a desire for tea! I was counting on spending the evening in good company and—oh, *fallacem hominum spem!* Accusative case with exclamations . . .

VERSHININ. So, I'll go alone. (*He goes out with Kulygin, whistling.*)

OLGA. My head hurts me, hurts me, hurts me . . . Andrei lost . . . everyone's talking about it. Tomorrow I'm free. Oh my God, what happiness. Free tomorrow, free the day after tomorrow . . . My head, my head . . . (*She goes out.*)

IRINA. (*Alone.*) All gone. No one left. (*An accordion is heard playing from the street. The wet nurse sings.*)

NATASHA. (*In fur coat and hat, crosses the hall, followed by the maid.*) I'll be back in half an hour. I'm just going for a little ride. (*She goes out.*)

IRINA. (*Alone, suddenly very sad.*) To Moscow! To Moscow! To Moscow!

CURTAIN

1

ACT THREE 2 YRS. LATER

Olga and Irina's room. There are beds on the left and on the right, behind screens. It's between two and three in the morning. We hear the alarm sound; there's a fire in town which has already been burning for some time. We see that no one is yet in bed in the house. Masha, in black as usual, is lying on a couch. Olga and Anfisa enter.

ANFISA. They're sitting there next to the stairs. I said to them, "At least come upstairs, please. Don't sit here." But they just sit there, crying, "Where's Papa? He might be burned up. God help him." What a thing to say! And there are people in the courtyard too . . . all half-naked.

OLGA. *(Taking some clothes out of the closet.)* Take this gray one . . . and this one too . . . this blouse . . . and the skirt, Nanny dear. My God, how dreadful. They say all of Little Kirsanov Street has burned down. Here, take this one too. *(She throws another dress into her arms.)* Those poor Vershinins are so frightened . . . their house nearly burned . . . They must stay here . . . We mustn't let them leave. Poor Fedotik. He's lost everything. He has nothing left . . .

ANFISA. Please call Ferapont, Olyushka. I can never carry all this.

OLGA. *(Ringing.)* No one's answering tonight. *(She calls from the door.)* Come here. Anybody. Come! *(Through the open door we can see the red glow of the fire; we hear the firemen's vehicle passing the house.)* It's dreadful! I'm so sick of it. *(Ferapont enters.)* Here, take all of this down. Next to the stairs you'll see the two Miss Kolotilins. Give them this . . . and this . . .

FERAPONT. Yes, Miss. Moscow burned too, in '12. Good Lord! The French couldn't get over it.

OLGA. Go now, go.

FERAPONT. Yes, Miss. *(He goes out.)*

OLGA. Give them everything, Nanny dear. What do we need? Give them everything. I'm tired, I can hardly stand . . . Don't let the Vershinins leave. The girls can sleep in the sitting room, and Alexander Ignatevich downstairs with the Baron . . . and

Fedotik, too. Or he can stay with us, in the hall . . . of course, as if on purpose, the doctor is drunk, totally drunk. Can't put anyone with him. And Vershinin's wife . . . she can sleep in the sitting room.

ANFISA. (*Wearily.*) Olyushka, dear, don't send me away! Please don't send me away!

OLGA. What are you talking about, Nanny? Nobody's sending you away.

ANFISA. (*Resting her head on Olga's breast.*) My treasure, my sweet Olga, I work hard, I work very hard, I do . . . And when I'm too weak, they say to me, "Go away." And where do you want me to go? Where can I go? I'm over eighty. I'll be eighty-two soon . . .

OLGA. Sit down, my little Nanny. Poor thing, you're tired. (*She makes her sit down.*) Rest, rest . . . there . . . you're so pale! (*Natasha enters.*)

NATASHA. They're saying we should immediately start a Rescue Committee to Aid the Homeless. I for one think that's a very good idea! It's the duty of the rich to aid the poor. Bobik and little Sophie are asleep, sweet dears. They haven't a care in the world. There are so many people in the house, everywhere, in every corner. The house is full of people. But there's flu going around. I'm scared for the children.

OLGA. (*Not listening to her.*) In this room it's quiet, you can't see the fire.

NATASHA. Yes . . . My hair must look a mess. (*In front of the mirror.*) They say I'm getting fat . . . It's not true. It's absolutely not true. Masha's sleeping, she's tired, poor thing. (*To Anfisa, coldly.*) I forbid you to keep sitting in my presence. Get up! Get out of here! (*Anfisa goes out. A pause.*) Why do you keep that old woman? I don't understand you.

OLGA. (*Stupefied.*) Excuse me, but I don't understand you.

NATASHA. She's not needed. She's a peasant. She can go live in the country . . . She's a luxury. I like order: no unnecessary servants in my house. (*She caresses Olga's cheek.*) You're tired, my poor lamb. Our headmistress is tired! When my Sophie's a big girl and goes to high school, I'll be frightened of you.

OLGA. I won't be headmistress.

NATASHA. You'll be elected, Olechka. It's been decided.

OLGA. I won't accept. I can't . . . it's beyond my strength. (*She drinks some water.*) You were so rude to Nanny . . . forgive me, but I can't stand it . . . I can't see straight . . .

NATASHA. (*Moved.*) Forgive me, Olya, forgive me. I didn't mean to hurt you. (*Masha gets up, takes her pillow, and goes out; she looks angry.*)

OLGA. Try and understand us, my dear . . . maybe it's because we've received a peculiar education, but I can't stand that kind of thing. That way of treating servants kills me, it just makes me sick . . . I lose heart!

NATASHA. Forgive me, forgive me . . . (*She kisses her.*)

OLGA. Each rudeness, however slight, each harsh word hurts me . . .

NATASHA. It's true I often speak without thinking, but you must agree, my dear, she could perfectly well live in the country.

OLGA. She's been with us for thirty years.

NATASHA. But she can't work any more. Either I don't understand you, or you're refusing to understand me. She can't work any more. All she does is sleep and rest.

OLGA. So, let her rest.

NATASHA. (*Surprised.*) What do you mean, let her rest? She's a servant! (*Through tears.*) I don't understand you, Olya. I have a nursemaid and a wet nurse, we have a housemaid, a cook . . . What good does that old woman do us? What good does she do us? (*We hear the alarm.*)

OLGA. I've aged ten years tonight.

NATASHA. We must understand each other, Olya. You are at the high school, and I am at home; you worry about teaching, and I'll take care of the house. When I talk about servants, I know what I'm saying, *I know what I'm saying!* She must go tomorrow, that old thief, that old hag . . . (*She stamps her feet.*) That witch! No one is supposed to upset me around here. No one is to upset me! (*Gaining control of herself.*) Listen, if you don't move downstairs we'll never stop quarreling. It's terrible. (*Kulygin enters.*)

KULYGIN. Where's Masha? It's time to go home. The fire is dying down. (*He stretches.*) Only one neighborhood's burned down. With this wind . . . the whole town could've been in flames. (*He sits.*) I'm exhausted. Olechka, my dear . . . I often say to myself: if there'd been no Masha, I would have married you . . . You're so good, Olechka. I'm tired . . . (*He listens.*)

OLGA. What is it?

KULYGIN. It's as if he'd done it on purpose. The doctor's having an alcoholic fit. Dead drunk. (*He gets up.*) I think he's coming this way. Do you hear him? Yes, he's coming . . . (*He laughs.*) What a

character! I'm going to hide. (*He goes toward the armoire and hides in the corner.*) He's such a devil!

OLGA. He didn't drink for two years. Now suddenly he's started up again. (*She goes with Natasha toward the back of the room. Chebutykin enters. He walks straight, as if he weren't drunk. He crosses the room, stops, looks in front of him, then goes toward the sink and washes his hands.*)

CHEBUTYKIN. (*Mournfully.*) To hell with them . . . all of them . . . They think I'm a doctor, that I can cure anything, but I don't know a thing, I've forgotten everything, I don't remember a thing, nothing. (*Olga and Natasha go out without his noticing them.*) The hell with them all . . . Last Wednesday I treated a woman in the Zasypi section. She's dead, it's my fault. I still knew something twenty-five years ago, vaguely, but now, nothing. Not a thing. Maybe I'm not a man, after all, maybe I'm just pretending to have arms and legs, and a head; maybe I don't exist, I only believe that I walk, eat, sleep . . . (*He cries.*) Oh, if only I could no longer exist! (*He stops crying, mournful.*) Oh, the hell with it . . . Talking at the club, day before yesterday, somebody mentioned Shakespeare and Voltaire. I haven't read anything of theirs, nothing at all, but I pretended I did, and so did the others. Oh, misery! Hell! I start to think about the woman who died last Wednesday because of me, and about other things . . . I'm so disgusted . . . I drink. (*Irina, Vershinin, and Tuzenbach enter. Tuzenbach wears civilian clothing: new, elegant.*)

IRINA. Let's stay here. No one will bother us.

VERSHININ. Without the soldiers, the town would've completely burned. Such good soldiers! (*He rubs his hands together with pleasure.*) Good people! Good soldiers!

KULYGIN. (*Coming out from behind the armoire, approaching them.*) Excuse me, gentlemen, can you tell me the time?

TUZENBACH. Nearly four. It's dawn.

IRINA. They're all in the hall. No one's even thinking of leaving. Your Solyony's there too. (*To Chebutykin.*) You should go to bed, doctor.

CHEBUTYKIN. It doesn't matter . . . but thank you. (*He combs his beard.*)

KULYGIN. Drunk as a lord, our Ivàn Romànich. (*He pats him on the shoulder.*) Bravo! *In vino veritas*, as the ancients said.

TUZENBACH. They've asked me to organize a concert for the benefit of the homeless.

IRINA. But with whom?

TUZENBACH. It's possible . . . if we wanted to . . . In my opinion, Maria Sergeevna plays the piano beautifully.

KULYGIN. Beautifully.

IRINA. But she's forgotten. She hasn't played in three or four years.

TUZENBACH. Nobody understands music in this town, not a soul, except me. I understand it, and I swear to you on my honor that Maria Sergeevna plays perfectly well, she has talent.

KULYGIN. You're right, Baron, you're right, of course. I love her very much, Masha. She's a fine woman.

TUZENBACH. To play like an angel, and to feel that nobody, nobody understands you!

KULYGIN. (*With a sigh.*) Yes . . . But would it be proper for her to take part in a concert? (*A pause.*) As far as I'm concerned, my friends, I don't know. Maybe it would be all right, after all. Well, to be perfectly frank: our principal is a fine person, very fine in fact, he's an extremely intelligent man, but his notions are a little . . . Of course, it's none of his business, but if you like, I can ask him what he thinks. (*Chebutykin takes a little porcelain clock and examines it.*)

VERSHININ. I got very dirty during the fire. I hardly look human. (*A pause.*) By the way, I heard yesterday that there's some question of transferring the brigade, possibly to Poland, or to Tchita.

TUZENBACH. I heard the same thing. Well then, the town'll be deserted.

IRINA. And we'll leave too!

CHEBUTYKIN. (*Letting the ceramic clock fall; it breaks.*) Smithereens. (*A pause; all seem sad and confused.*)

KULYGIN. (*Picking up the debris.*) Breaking such a valuable thing! Oh! Ivan Romanich! You deserve a zero minus in conduct!

IRINA. It was poor Mama's clock.

CHEBUTYKIN. Maybe . . . maybe it was Mama's . . . maybe I didn't break it. It's all an illusion anyway. Maybe we only think we exist, but we really don't. I don't know anything. Nobody knows anything. (*He goes toward the door.*) Why are you looking at me like that, all of you? Natasha's having an affair with Protopopov, and you don't see it, do you? You sit there, seeing nothing, while Natasha's having an affair with Protopopov. (*He sings.*) "Allow me to offer you this fig . . ."

VERSHININ. Yes . . . (*He laughs.*) How strange it all is! (*A pause.*) The fire starts, I run home. The house is out of danger, but my two little girls are standing at the door, half dressed; their mother's not there; around them, busy people, horses, barking dogs, and on their small faces I see alarm, horror, helplessness, and God knows what else. I saw those faces and my heart fell. My God, I thought, what else will they have to bear in their lifetimes, those little ones? I take them and run, and I think only of that: what they will have to bear in this world. (*We hear the alarm. A pause.*) We arrive here and find their mother: screaming, angry. (*Masha comes in, carrying her pillow; she sits on the couch.*) My little girls by the front door, in their nightgowns, the street glowing red from the fire, and that terrible noise, and it made me think similar things must have happened, many years ago; the enemy arrived suddenly, pillaging, burning . . . and yet, what a difference there is between now and the past! In a little more time, in just two or three hundred years, they'll think of us in the same way: with horror and derision; everything that exists today will seem awkward to them, and heavy, uncomfortable—strange. Oh, what a life they'll have, what a life! (*He laughs.*) Excuse me, there I go again, starting to philosophize. But allow me to go on, my friends. I very much want to philosophize today. (*A pause.*) It's as if we were all asleep! And, as I was saying: what a life they'll have! For the moment, there are only three of you in this town, but in future generations there'll be others who'll resemble you, more and more of them, and a time will come when things will change; they'll be as you want them, everyone will live by your example, until finally even you will be surpassed, and others will spring up, even better than you . . . (*He laughs.*) I am in an extraordinary mood today. I feel very much like living. (*He sings.*) "Love, queen of the ages, how sweet her ecstasies . . ."

MASHA. Da-dee, da-dum, da-dee . . .

VERSHININ. Da-dum . . .

MASHA. Da-dee, da-dah da-dum?

VERSHININ. Da-dee da-dah dee-dee! (*He laughs. Fedotik enters.*)

FEDOTIK. (*Dancing.*) Burned, burned, all burned down! Everything gone! (*Laughter.*)

IRINA. What's so funny about that? Everything burned down . . .

FEDOTIK. (*Laughing.*) Everything, absolutely everything burned down. Nothing left. My guitar is burned, and the photographs,

and all my letters . . . and the notebook I wanted to give you also burned. (*Solyony enters.*)

IRINA. No, Vasily Vasilevich, please, go. You can't come in here.

SOLYONY. Why is the baron allowed, and I am not?

VERSHININ. Indeed, it's time to go. And the fire?

SOLYONY. It seems to be dying down. But that's positively peculiar. Why's the baron allowed in here, and I'm not? (*He takes a vial of perfume out of his pocket and sprays it on himself.*)

VERSHININ. Da-dee da-dum da-dee?

MASHA. Da-dum.

VERSHININ. (*Laughing, to Solyony.*) Let's go into the hall.

SOLYONY. Well. We'll remember that. Of course we could press it further, but "'twould annoy the geese, I fear . . ." (*He looks at Tuzenbach.*) Here, tsik, tsik, tsik. (*Solyony, Vershinin, and Fedotik go out.*)

IRINA. That Solyony stinks of tobacco smoke. (*She looks at Tuzenbach with surprise.*) He's sleeping! Baron! Baron!

TUZENBACH. (*Waking up.*) So tired . . . the brickyard . . . No, no, I'm not delirious; I meant the brickyard, I'm going to work there soon. I've already approached them. (*To Irina, tenderly.*) You're so pale and so beautiful, you're enchanting. Your pallor illuminates the night, like light. You're sad, you're unhappy with living . . . Oh, come with me, come with me, we'll work together!

MASHA. Nicolai Lvovich, go.

TUZENBACH. (*Laughing.*) Are you there? I didn't see you. (*He kisses Irina's hand.*) Goodbye, I'm going. I see you now, and I'm remembering how you were on your name day; it seems such a long time ago . . . You were cheerful and happy, talking about the joys of work . . . I dreamt then of such a happy life! What happened to it? (*He kisses her hand.*) You have tears in your eyes. You should sleep, it's dawn, day is breaking . . . oh, if only I could give my life for you.

MASHA. Go, Nicolai Lvovich. Now really! What's the—

TUZENBACH. I'm going. (*He goes out.*)

MASHA. (*Lying down.*) Are you asleep, Fyodor?

KULYGIN. Hunh?

MASHA. You should go home.

KULYGIN. My sweet, my precious Masha . . .

IRINA. She's tired. Let her rest, Fedya.

KULYGIN. I'm going. Now . . . My wonderful wife, my sweet . . . my only, I love you.

MASHA. (*With some anger.*) *Amo, amas, amat, amamus, amatis, amant.*

KULYGIN. (*Laughing.*) No, really, she's amazing. I've been her husband for seven years now, and I feel the same, as if we'd been married yesterday. Really, you're an amazing woman. I'm so happy, I'm so happy, I'm so happy!

MASHA. I'm so bored, I'm so bored, I'm so bored. (*She sits up and speaks.*) It won't go out of my head. It's disgusting. It keeps hammering at me, I can't not talk about it. It's about Andrei. He's mortgaged this house and his wife has put the money in her pocket. But the house belongs to us, to all four of us, not just to him. He must know that, if he's honest.

KULYGIN. Why talk about it, Masha? What difference can it make to you? Andrei is riddled with debts, leave him alone.

MASHA. Anyway, it's disgusting. (*She lies back down.*)

KULYGIN. You and I are not poor. I work, I go to the high school, I give lessons . . . I'm an honest man . . . simple. *Omnia mea mecum porto*, as they say.

MASHA. I don't need anything. It's the unfairness of it that disgusts me. (*A pause.*) Go, Fyodor.

KULYGIN. (*Kissing her.*) You're tired. Why don't you take a nap for half an hour; I'll stay downstairs, and wait for you. (*He goes toward the door.*) I'm so happy, I'm so happy, I'm so happy. (*He goes out.*)

IRINA. It's true . . . our Andrei has become petty and insignificant . . . he's aged so with that woman! To think that he wanted to become a university professor, and now he's proud to have finally been made a member of the County Council. A member of the council of which Protopopov is the president . . . The whole town is talking about it, laughing; he's the only one who doesn't know . . . and when everyone runs to see the fire, he stays in his room, completely indifferent, just sits there playing the violin. (*Nervous.*) Oh it's hideous, hideous, hideous! (*She cries.*) I can't stand it any more, I can't! I can't! (*Olga comes in and starts to tidy her dressing table. Irina, crying loudly.*) Throw me out, I can't bear it any more!

OLGA. (*Frightened.*) What it is? Darling!

IRINA. (*Sobbing.*) Where? Where's it all gone? Where? Oh, my God, my God! I've forgotten everything! Everything's getting

mixed up in my head. I don't even know how to say "window" or "ceiling" in Italian any more. I'm forgetting, I'm forgetting more every day, and life is passing, it'll never come back, and we'll never, never go to Moscow . . . I can see perfectly well we're never going to leave.

OLGA. My darling. Darling . . .

IRINA. (*Getting hold of herself.*) Oh, I'm so miserable! I can't work any more, I don't want to work any more . . . It's enough, enough! First it was the telegraph office, now it's the city council and I hate, I have contempt for, everything they make me do there . . . I'm almost twenty-four, I've been working for a long time, and now my brain is dried out. I'm thinner, uglier, older, and nothing, nothing, no satisfaction. Time is passing, and it feels like I'm getting further and further from whatever is real and beautiful; I'm approaching a cliff. I'm desperate, I don't understand why I'm still alive, why I haven't killed myself . . .

OLGA. Don't cry, my sweetheart, don't cry . . . It hurts me.

IRINA. I'm not crying, that's enough. You see, I'm not crying any more. It's finished!

OLGA. Darling, I'm telling you as a sister and a friend; listen to me: marry the baron. (*Irina cries softly.*) I know you respect him, that you appreciate him very much . . . It's true he's not handsome, but he's such an honest man, he's so pure . . . One doesn't marry out of love, but out of duty, at least that's how I feel about it. I would certainly have married any man who asked me, whoever he was, so long as he was honest . . . even an old man . . .

IRINA. I was waiting; I thought when we went to Moscow, I'd meet the one I was fated to meet. I dreamt of him, I loved him . . . but that's just silly, just silly . . .

OLGA. (*Embracing her sister.*) My darling, my wonderful little sister, I understand, I really do. When the Baron Nicolai Lvovich resigned from the army, when he first came here in civilian clothes, he seemed so ugly to me that I started to cry. He asked me, "Why are you crying?" What could I tell him? But if it's God's will that you marry him, I'd be happy. That would be different, quite different. (*Natasha, a candle in her hand, crosses the stage in silence from right to left.*)

MASHA. (*Sitting.*) Look at that. The way she walks you'd think she was the one who lit the fire.

OLGA. Don't be stupid. You're so stupid, Masha. You're the most

stupid person in the family, if you don't mind my saying so. (*A pause.*)

MASHA. My sweet sisters, there's something I have to confess. I can't keep it in any more. I'll confess to you and then no more, not a word, to anyone . . . But I'm going to tell you . . . (*Lowering her voice.*) It's my secret, but I want you to know everything . . . I can't not say it any more . . . (*A pause.*) I love, I love . . . I love that man . . . the one you just saw . . . Why hide it? I love Vershinin.

OLGA. (*Behind the screen.*) Stop that. I can't hear you anyway.

MASHA. What to do? (*She holds her head.*) First I thought he was strange, then I felt sorry for him . . . then I started to love him, to love him: his voice, his words, his troubles, his two little girls.

OLGA. (*Behind the screen.*) I can't hear you. Whatever nonsense you're saying, I can't hear anything.

MASHA. It's you who are stupid, Olya. I love him, that's my destiny . . . that's my fate. And he loves me. It's frightening, isn't it? It's not supposed to be that way, is it? (*She takes Irina's hand and pulls it toward her.*) Oh darling . . . how're we going to live, what's going to happen to us? In a novel everything seems so simple, it all works out, but when you yourself are in love, you realize that no one knows anything, that each has to decide for himself . . . My darlings, my sweet little sisters . . . I've confessed, and now I won't say any more . . . I'll be like the madman in Gogol . . . silence . . . silence . . . (*Andrei enters, followed by Ferapont.*)

ANDREI. (*Irritated.*) What do you want? I don't understand.

FERAPONT. (*Stopping at the door, impatiently.*) I told you at least ten times, Andrei Sergeevich.

ANDREI. To begin with, to you I am not Andrei Sergeevich; I am your honor!

FERAPONT. It's the firemen, Honor. They want your permission to pass through your garden to go to the river. Otherwise they keep having to go around.

ANDREI. All right. Tell them it's all right. (*Ferapont goes out.*) They irritate me, all of them. Where's Olga? (*Olga comes out from behind the screen.*) I was looking for you. Give me the key to the cupboard, I've lost mine. Your little key. (*Olga hands him the key in silence. Irina goes behind her screen. A pause.*) It was a big fire. It's dying down now. Oh, the hell with it, Ferapont annoyed me, so I

said something stupid . . . Your honor! . . . (Pause.) Why don't you say something, Olya? (A pause.) It's time to drop all this nonsense. Stop brooding for no rhyme or reason. You're here, and Masha and Irina too. Fine. Let's have it out now, once and for all. What are you holding against me? What? I'd like to know.

OLGA. Oh, let's not talk about it now, Andryusha. We'll see tomorrow. (Upset.) What a horrible night!

ANDREI. (Very embarrassed.) Don't get upset, Olga. I'm asking you perfectly calmly, what do you have against me? You can tell me.

VERSHININ'S VOICE. (From Offstage.) Da-dee da-dum da-dee!

MASHA. (Standing, raising her voice.) Da-dee da-dah dee-dee! (To Olga.) Goodbye, Olya, God keep you. (She goes behind the screen, kisses Irina.) Sleep well. Goodbye, Andrei. Leave them alone now, they're tired . . . explain yourself tomorrow. (She goes out.)

OLGA. Yes, Andryusha, let's put it off 'til tomorrow. (She goes behind the screen.) It's time to sleep now.

ANDREI. I'll just tell you and then I'll go. In the first place, you seem to have something against Natasha, my wife, I've noticed it since the day I married her. In my opinion Natasha's a good person: honest, frank, and honorable. I love my wife, I respect her, you understand, I respect her and I want others to respect her too. I tell you again: she's an honest and honorable woman, and your disagreements with her, forgive me, are just whims. (A pause.) Secondly, it seems as if you're angry because I didn't become a professor, because I'm not devoting myself to science. But I'm working at the Zemstvo, I'm a member of the County Council, and I believe that work to be just as sacred, just as high as that of science. I'm a member of the Council and I'm proud of it, if you want to know . . . (A pause.) Thirdly . . . I have one other thing to tell you . . . I've mortgaged the house, without asking your permission . . . I admit I'm guilty of that . . . I ask your forgiveness. It's my debts . . . thirty-five thousand . . . I don't gamble at cards any more. I gave up gambling a long time ago . . . My main excuse is that you, the girls, have a pension, whereas I . . . have . . . no income . . . so to speak . . .

KULYGIN. (On the threshold.) Masha's not here? (Anxious.) Where is she? That's odd . . . (He goes out.)

ANDREI. They're not listening to me. Natasha is an excellent woman, she's very honest. (He paces, then stops.) When I married her, I thought we'd be happy . . . all of us . . . but, oh my

God . . . (*He cries.*) My darlings, my precious sisters, don't believe me, don't believe a word I say . . . (*He goes out.*)

KULYGIN. (*At the door, anxious.*) Where's Masha? Masha's not here? That's very odd. (*He goes out. We hear the alarm, the stage is empty.*)

IRINA. (*Behind the screen.*) Olya, who's knocking on the floor?

OLGA. It's the doctor, Ivan Romanich. He's drunk.

IRINA. What an agony this night is! (*A pause.*) Olya! (*She sticks her head out from behind the screen.*) Did you hear what he said? They're going to transfer the brigade; they're going to send it away.

OLGA. It's only a rumor.

IRINA. Then we'll be all alone here . . . Olya!

OLGA. Well?

IRINA. Darling, Olga, I respect, I appreciate him, the baron, he's an excellent man, I'm even willing to marry him, I consent, only . . . let's go to Moscow! Please, let's go! Moscow: it's what's best in the world! Let's go, Olya! Let's go!

CURTAIN

①

ACT FOUR ABOUT A YEAR LATER.

The old garden: the Prozorov's house. There is a long avenue of pines which leads to a river. On the other shore of the river, a forest. To the right, the terrace of the house; on the table, a bottle and some glasses; champagne has just been drunk. It's noon. Passersby sometimes cross the garden to go from the street to the river; five soldiers pass by rapidly.

Chebutykin, in a placid mood which he will maintain throughout the act, is seated in an armchair, in the garden, where he is waiting to be called. He wears an officer's hat; he has a cane in his hand. On the terrace, Irina, Kulygin, and Tuzenbach are saying goodbye to Fedotik and Rodé, who are coming down the steps. Kulygin has a medal around his neck; his moustache is shaved off. Fedotik and Rodé are in dress uniform.

TUZENBACH. (*Kissing Fedotik.*) You're a good man, we've been friends. (*He kisses Rodé.*) Again. Goodbye, comrade.

IRINA. *Au revoir.*

FEDOTIK. Not *au revoir*, it's farewell. We'll never see each other again.

KULYGIN. Who knows? (*He wipes his eyes, smiling.*) Now me too, I'm crying!

IRINA. Maybe we will meet again, some day.

FEDOTIK. Maybe . . . in ten or fifteen years. We'll hardly recognize each other, we'll say hello . . . politely. (*He takes a photograph.*) Don't move. It's the last one.

RODÉ. (*Embracing Tuzenbach.*) We won't see each other again. (*He kisses Irina's hand.*) Thank you for everything, for everything.

FEDOTIK. (*Upset.*) Please don't move!

TUZENBACH. We will meet again, if it's God's will. Write to us. Be sure to write.

RODÉ. (*Glancing lovingly at the garden.*) Goodbye, trees! (*He shouts.*) Hop-hop! (*A pause.*) Goodbye, echo.

KULYGIN. Who knows, maybe you'll get married there, in Poland. Your Polish wife will kiss you and call you "*kochane*." (*He laughs.*)

FEDOTIK. (*Looking at his watch.*) We have less than an hour. Only

Solyony goes by barge from our battery. For us, it's with the troops. Today three batteries go, in divisionary formation, the three others tomorrow, and then you'll have peace and quiet.

TUZENBACH. And deadly boredom.

RODÉ. But where's Maria Segeevna?

KULYGIN. Masha's in the garden.

FEDOTIK. We want to say goodbye to her.

RODÉ. Goodbye. I have to go or I'm going to cry. (*He quickly embraces Tuzenbach and Kulygin and kisses Irina's hand.*) Such happy days here . . .

FEDOTIK. (*To Kulygin.*) Here's a little souvenir for you . . . a notebook with a pencil . . . We'll go down that way, toward the river . . . (*They move off, both looking back.*)

RODÉ. (*Shouting.*) Hop-hop!

KULYGIN. (*Shouting.*) Goodbye! (*At the back of the stage Fedotik and Rodé meet Masha and begin saying goodbye to her; she goes out with them.*)

IRINA. Gone . . . (*She sits on the lowest step of the terrace.*)

CHEBUTYKIN. They forgot to say goodbye to me.

IRINA. And what about you, why didn't you say something to them?

CHEBUTYKIN. Yes, I forgot too, I don't know why. Anyway, I'll be seeing them again soon: I'm going tomorrow. Just one more little day . . . When I get my pension, in a year, I'll come back. I'll finish out my last days with you. Only one little year until I get my pension. (*He stuffs a newspaper into his pocket, pulls out another.*) And when I come back I'll reform from top to bottom, I'll be good . . . oh, very, very good—utterly respectable . . .

IRINA. It's true, dear old friend, you really have to change your ways . . . You have to!

CHEBUTYKIN. I know. I know it. (*He quietly begins to sing.*) Tarara boom dee-ay, just one more little day . . .

KULYGIN. Incurable, our Ivan Romanich, incurable!

CHEBUTYKIN. I should be your pupil.

IRINA. Fyodor's shaved off his moustache. I can't stand to look at him like that.

KULYGIN. Why?

CHEBUTYKIN. I could tell you what you look like, but I won't.

KULYGIN. Too bad! It's the fashion, the *modus vivendi*. The principal shaved off his moustache. And I've shaved off mine since I've been made an inspector. Nobody likes it, but that doesn't

bother me. I'm happy, with or without a moustache. (*He sits. At the back of the garden Andrei pushes his child in a baby carriage.*)

IRINA. Ivan Romanich dear, you're my friend, I'm worried. You were out on the boulevard last night: tell me what happened there.

CHEBUTYKIN. What happened? Nothing. Nothing. A lot of nonsense. (*He reads his newspaper.*) It doesn't matter.

KULYGIN. People are saying that Solyony and the baron met each other on the boulevard yesterday, near the theater . . .

TUZENBACH. Why talk about it? Stop it now. Really. (*He makes a gesture with his hand and goes into the house.*)

KULYGIN. Near the theater . . . Solyony set out to annoy the baron, who wouldn't stand for it and insulted him . . .

CHEBUTYKIN. I don't know a thing about it. It's just a lot of nonsense.

KULYGIN. At a seminary once, the teacher wrote the word "nonsense" on a pupil's paper, and the pupil thought the word was "notable," in Latin. (*He laughs.*) Incredibly funny. They say that Solyony is in love with Irina and that's why he hates the baron . . . It's perfectly natural, of course. Irina is a very charming young girl. She's a little like Masha, always lost in thought. Only you have a softer character, Irina. Of course Masha has a very good character, too. I love my Masha. (*We hear at the end of the garden some "Oo-oo-"ing and "Hop-hop-"ing.*)

IRINA. (*Shuddering.*) Everything scares me today. (*A pause.*) I'm all packed; after dinner I'll send off my things. Tomorrow I'll be married to the baron, and we leave for the brickworks. The day after tomorrow I'll be teaching school, I'll begin a new life. May God help me! When I passed my teaching examination, I cried; I was so happy, I was so grateful . . . (*A pause.*) A cart will come and get my things later.

KULYGIN. That's very nice, of course . . . although I daresay not very sensible. A lot of high-minded plans . . . but not necessarily sensible. Still, that won't stop me from wishing you the best of—

CHEBUTYKIN. (*Moved.*) My angel, my dove . . . my own little golden girl! You've all gone so far; I can't catch up with you. I've stayed behind, like an old migrant bird who can't fly any more. Fly away, my dears, fly away and may God keep you well. (*A pause.*) Fyodor Ilych, you shouldn't have shaved off your moustache.

KULYGIN. Oh, leave me alone! (*He sighs.*) The army leaves today;

X FROM
SL TO SR

everything comes back to normal. Whatever anyone says, Masha is an honorable woman and a very good one. I love her very much, and I thank God for my good luck . . . We're not all lucky! There's a man named Kozyrev who lives here; he works in the excise office. We were in the same class in high school, but he was left back in tenth grade because he couldn't understand *ut consecutivum*. Now he's poor as a churchmouse, and he's sick too. Whenever I meet him on the street I say, "Hello, *ut consecutivum*!" He answers: "Yes, *consecutivum*, that's right." Then he starts to cough. But I've always been lucky; look how happy I am. They even gave me the Stanislaus, second degree, and now it's I who teach others that famous *ut consecutivum*. Of course, it's true that I'm intelligent, more than most, but happiness doesn't lie there . . . I know that . . . (*In the house someone plays the piano: "The Maiden's Prayer."*)

IRINA. As of tomorrow night I won't ever have to hear that "Maiden's Prayer" again, and I won't have to see Protopopov . . . (*A pause.*) He's there in the sitting room again . . .

KULYGIN. The headmistress isn't back yet?

IRINA. No. But she's been sent for. If you knew how painful it is to live here alone, without Olya! She lives at the high school; the headmistress, she's busy all day, and I'm alone, I'm bored, I have nothing to do, I hate my room . . . So I've decided: if it's written that I can't go to Moscow, then I can't, that's that, I yield. It's my fate, there's nothing I can do about it . . . It's true that everything depends on the will of God. Nicolai Lvovich proposed to me. I thought about it, and then I said yes. He's an excellent man, in fact it's amazing how good he is. And suddenly, now it's as if I had wings, I'm happier, I feel lighter, and I want to work again—work . . . But something happened yesterday, I feel there's something hanging over me . . .

CHEBUTYKIN. "Notable." Nonsense.

NATASHA. (*At the window.*) Here comes the headmistress!

KULYGIN. The headmistress is here! Let's go! (*He goes into the house with Irina.*)

CHEBUTYKIN. (*Reading his newspaper, singing softly.*) Tarara boom dee-ay, just one more little day . . . (*Masha approaches; toward the back Andrei pushes the baby carriage.*)

MASHA. Here he is, the picture of peace and quiet—all innocence . . .

CHEBUTYKIN. And so?

X from
SR TO SL.

(2)

MASHA. (*Sitting.*) So nothing . . . (*A pause.*) Did you love my mother?

CHEBUTYKIN. Yes. Very much.

MASHA. Did she love you?

CHEBUTYKIN. (*After a silence.*) That, I no longer remember.

MASHA. Is Mine here? Our cook Marfa used to call her policeman that in the old days: Mine. Is he here?

CHEBUTYKIN. Not yet.

MASHA. When you grab at bits of happiness, at crumbs, and when even that's taken away, you become vulgar, and mean. (*She points to her chest.*) I'm boiling, in here. (*Looking at her brother Andrei, who's pushing the carriage.*) There's our Andrei, our brother . . . All hope gone. A hundred people were hoisting a bell; so much labor and so much money to make that bell, and suddenly it fell and broke into a thousand pieces—just like that, for no reason. That's how it is with Andrei . . .

GO
ENTER FROM
SL.

ANDREI. When are things finally going to quiet down in that house? What a racket! . . .

X DSR
PRAGONALLY,

CHEBUTYKIN. Soon. (*He looks at his watch.*) This is an old watch; it has a striker. (*He winds up the watch; it strikes.*) The first, the second, and the fifth battery leave at exactly one o'clock. (*A pause.*) And I leave tomorrow.

X TO TABLE

ANDREI. Forever?

CHEBUTYKIN. I don't know. Maybe I'll come back in a year, although . . . who knows . . . what difference does it make? (*We hear from very far off sounds of a violin and a harp.*)

ANDREI. The town will be deserted. It's as if it were being put under glass. (*A pause.*) Something happened yesterday by the theater. Everybody's talking about it, and I don't know what it was . . . What was it?

CHEBUTYKIN. Nothing. A lot of nonsense. Solyony tried to provoke the baron who got carried away and insulted him. Things turned sour, and Solyony challenged him to a duel. (*He looks at his watch.*) I think it's time . . . at 12:30 in the State Forest, there, on the other side of the river . . . Pif-paf! (*He laughs.*) Solyony thinks he's Lermontov; he actually writes poetry! Still, it is his third duel.

MASHA. Whose?

CHEBUTYKIN. Solyony's.

MASHA. And the baron's?

* IF YOU WANT MY OPINION, TO PARTICIPATE IN A DUEL OR TO BE PRESENT AT ONE, EVEN IN THE CAPACITY OF A DOCTOR, IS SIMPLY IMMORAL. (EUGENE BRISTOW TRANSLATION)

CHEBUTYKIN. The baron's what? (A pause.)

MASHA. It's all getting mixed up in my head . . . we can't let him do that. He might wound the baron, he might even kill him.

CHEBUTYKIN. The baron is a brave man, but one baron more or less—what difference does it make? Too bad! Doesn't matter to me. (*Behind the garden someone shouts, "Oo-oo! Hop-hop!"*) Just a minute! That's the second. Skvortsov. He's out there in a boat, waiting. (A pause.)

* ANDREI. I think duels are immoral. And I think it's immoral to help conduct one, even as a doctor.

CHEBUTYKIN. That's just an idea in your head. We're not even alive. The world is an illusion. We don't exist, we only think we do . . . so what difference does anything make?

MASHA. Talk, talk, talk the livelong day. (*She takes a few steps.*) God, to have to live in this climate; it might actually snow today. And on top of it these conversations. (*She stops.*) I refuse to go into that house, I can't. As soon as Vershinin comes, let me know. (*She walks in the pines.*) The birds are leaving already . . . (*She lifts her head.*) Swans . . . or ducks—my darlings, my happy ones . . . (*She goes out.*)

ANDREI. The house will be empty now. The officers are leaving, you're leaving, my sister's getting married, I'll be alone.

CHEBUTYKIN. And what about your wife? (*Ferapont enters, bringing papers.*)

ANDREI. My wife is my wife. She's respectable and proper; she might even be good. But there's something in her that's blind and stingy, rough to the touch, something on an animal level. She's not quite human. I can only say that to you; it's only you I can talk to about it. It's true that I love her, but sometimes she seems to me to be extremely vulgar, and then I get confused, I don't understand any more why I love her as much as I do, or why I ever loved her . . .

CHEBUTYKIN. (*Getting up.*) I'm leaving tomorrow, my friend. We may never see each other again. So here's a piece of advice: take your hat and your walking stick, and go . . . Go, and don't look back. And the further you go, the better. (*Solyony and two officers are passing at the back of the stage. Solyony approaches Chebutykin, the officers go out.*)

SOLYONY. Doctor! It's time, it's almost 12:30. (*He bows to Andrei.*)

CHEBUTYKIN. I'm coming, I'm coming. You're so boring, all of you, you make me sick. (*To Andrei.*) If anyone asks for me,

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Andryusha, tell them I'll be back soon. (*He sighs a great sigh.*)
Oh-oh-oh!

SOLYONY. "Lying under a tree, he thought he had time to spare.
And looked up too late to see the oncoming bear." (*He goes with him.*) What are you groaning about, old man?

CHEBUTYKIN. Leave me alone!

SOLYONY. How do you feel?

CHEBUTYKIN. (*Angrily.*) I'm fine, absolutely fine. Just leave me alone.

SOLYONY. There's no need for an old doctor to get upset. I'm not going to indulge myself; I'll merely wing him like a bird. (*He takes a vial of perfume from his pocket and sprays his hands.*) I've used up a whole bottle on them today, (*Looking at his hands.*) but they still smell the same; they smell of corpse. (*A pause.*) There! Do you remember these lines? "And, restless, he seeks the storm, as if in the storm, there'd be peace . . ."

CHEBUTYKIN. Yes. "Lying under a tree, he thought he had time to spare, And looked up too late to see the oncoming bear." (*Solyony and Chebutykin go out. We hear shouts: "Hop-hop! Oo-oo!" Andrei and Ferapont enter.*)

FERAPONT. It's . . . papers to sign.

ANDREI. (*Nervous.*) Leave me alone! Leave me alone! Please! (*He leaves, pushing a baby carriage.*)

FERAPONT. But . . . papers . . . that's what papers are for . . . to sign. (*He goes toward the back of the stage.*)

[Enter Irina and Tuzenbach, who is wearing a boater. Kulygin crosses the stage, shouting, "Oo-oo, Masha, Oo-oo!")]

TUZENBACH. There, I think, goes the only man in town who's delighted to see the army leave.

IRINA. That's understandable. (*A pause.*) The town will be deserted.

TUZENBACH. (*Looking at his watch.*) Darling, I'll be back in a little while.

IRINA. Where are you going?

TUZENBACH. I have to go to town, then . . . to accompany some friends.

IRINA. That's not true . . . Nicolai, why are you so distracted today? (*A pause.*) Is it what happened last night near the theater?

TUZENBACH. (*With an impatient gesture.*) I'll be back in an hour, I'll see you then. (*He kisses her hands.*) Oh, my joy . . . (*He looks at her closely.*) I've loved you now for five years, and I still can't get

used to it . . . you seem to me more beautiful every day. Your wonderful hair . . . so marvelous. Those eyes! Tomorrow, I take you away with me, and we'll work, we'll be rich; all my dreams will come true: you'll be happy. There's only one thing missing, only one thing: you don't love me.

IRINA. But that's not in my power. I'll be your wife, your faithful and obedient wife, but it's true, I'm not in love with you! What can I do about it? (*She cries.*) I've never known love. I've dreamed about it for so long, but my heart is double-locked, like some precious piano, and the key is lost. (*A pause.*) You look worried.

TUZENBACH. I didn't sleep last night. It's not that I'm anxious; there's nothing in my life to frighten me. But that lost key tortures me. It keeps me from sleeping . . . Say something to me. (*A pause.*) Say something . . .

IRINA. What? What can I say?

TUZENBACH. Something.

IRINA. I can't! That's enough! (*A pause.*)

TUZENBACH. I know it's silly. It's funny how in life sometimes a little detail will take on such importance, for no reason. You laugh at it, as you always have, but somehow you can't stop thinking about it. Let's not talk about it any more. I'm happy! It's as if I were seeing these pines for the first time—these maples, these birches—and they're looking at me too, with curiosity, they're waiting . . . How beautiful the trees are—life should be beautiful around them. (*We hear cries, "Oo-oo! Hop-hop!"*) I have to go, it's time. Look at that tree: it's dead, but it's still swaying in the wind with the others. I think when I die, I'll still be alive too, in some way. Darling, goodbye. (*He kisses her hands.*) Your papers, the ones you gave me, they're on my table, under the calendar.

IRINA. I'm going with you.

TUZENBACH. (*Worried.*) No! No! (*He leaves rapidly, but stops in the pines.*) Irina?

IRINA. Yes?

TUZENBACH. (*Not knowing what to say.*) I . . . didn't have any coffee this morning. Will you ask them to make me some? (*Irina remains standing, thoughtful, then goes toward the back of the stage and sits on the swings. Andrei enters, pushing the baby carriage. Ferapont follows him.*)

FERAPONT. Andrei Sergeevich, these are not my papers. They belong to the administration. I didn't invent them.

ANDREI. What happened? What happened to the way I was? I

used to be young, and full of joy; I was intelligent, I had great dreams; I had marvelous thoughts, I was full of hope, my future was full of hope ./. . Why is it that as soon as we begin to grow up we become boring and dull and insignificant, lazy, callous, useless, and miserable? ./. . This town has been here for two hundred years, it has a hundred thousand inhabitants, and there's not one who isn't identical to the next ./. . There's not one hero—there never has been—not one great leader, no scholar, no artist, there's never been one man even the least remarkable. / There's no one to excite jealousy, no one who inspires the least desire to walk in his footsteps ./. . all anyone ever does here is eat, drink, and sleep, and then they die . . . And others come into the world, and they too eat, drink, and sleep, and when they want to entertain themselves because they're afraid of dying of boredom, they drown in malicious gossip, vodka, card games, and intrigue ./. . The wives deceive their husbands, and the husbands lie; they pretend to see nothing, to hear nothing. And the children are lost to the irresistible pull of vulgarity; it snuffs out their divine spark in the end. They become the living dead, as pitiful as their parents, each one exactly like the next ./. . (To Ferapont, angrily.) What do you want?

FERAPONT. What do I want? For you to sign these.

ANDREI. You're so annoying . . . TAKE PAPERS!

FERAPONT. (Handing him the papers.) A little while ago the janitor at the tax collector's office said that last winter in Petersburg it was two hundred degrees below zero.

ANDREI. Everything is so disgusting . . . but when I start to think of the future, that seems beautiful to me. And I feel lighter, more spacious; there's a light shining from the distance; I see freedom, and my children and I, we'll be freed from laziness, from drink, and from goose with cabbage, and from the after-dinner nap, from the slothful life of parasites!

FERAPONT. Two thousand people died of the cold, he said. Everybody's scared is Petersburg, . . . or maybe it's Moscow . . . I don't remember.

ANDREI. (Suddenly moved.) My sisters! My darling, my wonderful sisters! (Through tears.) Masha . . . my sister! . . .

NATASHA (Through the window.) Who's out there talking so loud? Is that you, Andryusha? You'll wake Sofochka. *Il ne faut pas faire du bruit, la Sophie est dormée déjà. Vous êtes un ours.* (Getting angry.) If you're going to talk, give the baby carriage to somebody else. Ferapont, take the carriage away from your master!

FERAPONT. Yes, ma'am. (*He pushes the carriage.*)

ANDREI. (*Confused.*) I'm speaking softly.

NATASHA (*Behind the window, caressing her child.*) Bobik, you little rascal! You naughty little Bobik!

ANDREI. (*Examining the papers.*) All right, all right, I'll look through all this, I'll sign what needs to be signed, then you can take it back to the council. (*He goes toward the house, reading the papers. Ferapont pushes the baby carriage toward the end of the garden.*)

NATASHA. (*At the window, caressing her child.*) Bobik, what's your mama's name? You little sweetheart. Who's there? It's Aunt Olya. Say to your aunt: "Hello, Olya!" (*Wandering musicians, a man and a young girl, play the violin and the harp. Vershinin, Olga, and Anfisa come out of the house and listen in silence to the music. Irina joins them.*)

OLGA. Our garden has become a regular public walk. They cross it on foot and on horse. Give them something, Nanny.

ANFISA. (*Giving some change to the musicians.*) There you are, dear hearts. God bless you! (*The musicians bow and leave.*) Poor things. Full stomach makes no music . . . (*To Irina.*) Hello, Arisha! (*She kisses her.*) Well, my little one, aren't I the lucky one! Here I am living at the high school with Olyushka, in an official apartment. God is so good to me in my old age. Poor sinner that I am, I never before had such a life. The official apartment is big: my own little room . . . my own little bed. We get all of that. When I wake up in the night, I think, "Oh Lord, Dear Mother of God, there's nobody in the world luckier than me."

VERSHININ. (*Looking at his watch.*) We're leaving right away, Olga Sergeevna. It's time to— (*A pause.*) With all my heart I wish you— Where is Maria Sergeevna?

IRINA. Somewhere in the garden. I'll go get her.

VERSHININ. If you'd be so kind . . . I have to hurry.

ANFISA. Me too, I'll go get her. (*She shouts.*) Mashenka! Oo-oo! (*She goes with Irina toward the back of the garden.*) Oo-oo! Oo-oo!

VERSHININ. Everything must come to an end. And so now we must separate . . . (*He looks at his watch.*) The town gave us a lunch today, champagne, the mayor made a speech; I ate and I listened, but my heart was here with you . . . (*Looking at the garden.*) I've become so used to you!

OLGA. Will we ever see each other again?

VERSHININ. I don't think so. (*A pause.*) My wife and my little girls will still be here for about two months; if something were to happen to them, if they needed . . . please . . .

OLGA. Of course. Don't worry. (*A pause.*) Tomorrow there won't

be a single soldier left in town, it'll all be a memory. And I suppose we'll start a new life. (*A pause.*) Nothing ever happens the way we want it to. I didn't want to be headmistress, but I am anyway. And it seems we're not to go to Moscow . . .

VERSHININ. Well . . . thank you again . . . Forgive me if for any reason . . . I talked a lot, much too much, forgive me for that too. Please remember me well . . .

OLGA. (*Wiping her eyes.*) Where's Masha, why doesn't she come?

VERSHININ. What can I tell you before leaving? What shall I philosophize about this one last time? (*He laughs.*) Life is hard. To many of us it seems utterly flat and hopeless, but still, you must admit, little by little things do get better, there's more clarity in the world, and probably there's a time not far away when life will actually be luminous. (*He looks at his watch.*) I have to leave. So far Man has been busy with war; his campaigns, his invasions, and his victories filled up his whole life. But we're past that now. There remains an immense void which demands to be filled . . . but how? The world is desperately looking for a solution. We'll find something . . . eventually. If only it would happen soon! (*A pause.*) You see, if only we could add education to love of work, and love of work to education . . . (*He looks at his watch.*) It's time.

OLGA. Here she is! (*Masha enters.*)

VERSHININ. I've come to say goodbye . . . (*Olga moves off a little so as not to disturb them.*)

MASHA. (*Looking him in the eyes.*) Goodbye . . . (*A long kiss.*)

OLGA. It's enough, enough . . . (*Masha bursts into sobs.*)

VERSHININ. Write to me! Don't forget me! You must let me go . . . it's time. Hold her, Olga Sergeevna, I have to . . . it's time . . . I'm late . . . (*Very moved, he kisses Olga's hands, embraces Masha once more, and goes out rapidly.*)

OLGA. Enough, Masha! Enough, my darling. (*Kulygin enters.*)

KULYGIN. (*Troubled.*) It's all right, let her cry, leave her alone. My good little Masha, my gentle Masha . . . you're my wife, and I'm happy, in spite of everything . . . I'm not complaining, I'm not reproaching you, Olya is my witness . . . We'll live just as we have, never a single word, not the least mention . . .

MASHA. (*Trying to hold back her sobs.*) "By the curved seashore, a green oak tree, around that oak, a chain of gold . . . around that oak, a chain of gold . . ." I'm going crazy . . . "By the curved seashore, a green oak tree . . ."

OLGA. Calm down, Masha, calm down. Give her some water.

MASHA. I'm not crying any more.

KULYGIN. She's not crying any more . . . she's being good. (*In the distance a shot reverberates dully.*)

MASHA. "By the curved seashore, a green oak tree, a chain of gold around that oak . . . a green . . . cat? . . . a green oak . . ." I'm mixing everything up . . . (*She drinks some water.*) My life is a failure . . . I don't need anything now . . . I'll calm down . . . Nothing matters now. What does that mean, "By the curved seashore?" Why are those words running around in my head? I'm getting all mixed up. (*Irina enters.*)

OLGA. Calm down, Masha. That's right . . . be reasonable. Let's go in.

MASHA. (*With anger.*) I will not go into that house. (*She starts to cry, but controls herself.*) I haven't gone in there and I won't go in . . .

IRINA. Let's sit here, the three of us; we don't need to say anything. You know I'm leaving tomorrow . . . (*A pause.*)

KULYGIN. Look at what I confiscated in the fifth grade yesterday. (*He puts on a false beard and moustache.*) I look like the German professor, don't I? (*He laughs.*) Don't I? Kids are funny!

MASHA. Yes, you look like you're German.

OLGA. (*Laughing.*) It's true, you do. (*Masha cries.*)

IRINA. Enough, Masha!

KULYGIN. It does look like him, doesn't it? . . . (*Natasha enters.*)

NATASHA. (*To the maid.*) What? Mr. Protopopov will take care of Sofochka, and give Bobik to Andrei Sergeevich in the garden. Children are such a nuisance. (*To Irina.*) You're leaving tomorrow, Irina? That's too bad. Why don't you stay longer, at least another week! (*She gives a little cry, seeing Kulygin, who, laughing, takes off his false beard and moustache.*) God, you scared me! (*To Irina.*) Don't think the separation will be easy for me, I'm used to you. I'll put Andrei into your room with his violin; he can scratch away there all he wants, and his room will be for my little Sofochka. What a darling child! She's so adorable! Today she looked at me with her pretty little eyes, and said, "Mama."

KULYGIN. She's a beautiful child, that's true.

NATASHA. Well, tomorrow I'll be all alone here. (*A sigh.*) The first thing I'll do is have this avenue of trees cut down, and that maple. It's so ugly at night . . . (*To Irina.*) My dear, that belt doesn't suit you at all. It's tasteless! You need something brighter.

And I'll have little flowers planted everywhere. It'll smell so nice . . . (*Severely.*) What is this fork doing here on this bench? (*She goes into the house, to the maid.*) What is this fork doing on this bench? I'm asking you! (*She shouts.*) Silence!

KULYGIN. She's off again. (*Offstage the military band is playing a march. All listen.*)

OLGA. They're leaving. (*Chebutykin enters.*)

MASHA. Our soldiers are leaving . . . Well . . . Have a good trip, everybody! (*To her husband.*) We have to go home. Where's my hat? My cape?

KULYGIN. I put them inside. I'll go get them. (*He goes into the house.*)

OLGA. Yes. It's time to go home.

CHEBUTYKIN. Olga Sergeevna!

OLGA. Yes? (*A pause.*) What?

CHEBUTYKIN. Nothing . . . I don't know how to tell you. (*He speaks into her ear.*)

OLGA. (*Frightened.*) Oh no! It's not possible!

CHEBUTYKIN. Yes . . . what a business . . . I'm tired, worn out, I don't want to talk about it. (*Vexed.*) Anyway, it doesn't matter . . .

MASHA. What is it?

OLGA. (*Embracing Irina.*) Oh, what a hateful day . . . My darling, I don't know how to tell you . . .

IRINA. What? Say it fast! What is it? Oh for God's sake . . . (*She cries.*)

CHEBUTYKIN. The baron was just killed in a duel.

IRINA. (*Crying softly.*) I knew it, I knew it . . . (*Chebutykin goes to the back of the stage and sits on a bench.*)

CHEBUTYKIN. I'm worn out . . . (*He takes a newspaper out of his pocket.*) Let them cry. (*He sings.*) Tarara boom dee-ay . . . just one more little day . . . In the end, it's all the same, isn't it? (*The three sisters remain standing, close against each other.*)

MASHA. The music . . . how happy it sounds . . . listen . . . They're leaving us; one of them has already gone forever . . . We've been left alone to start our lives all over again. We have to go on living . . . somehow . . . start again . . .

IRINA. (*Leaning her head on Olga's breast.*) Some day it'll all be understood: why, why all this suffering . . . Some day they'll know . . . it'll be clear—no more secrets—but not now. Now we must work; we must go on living. Tomorrow I'll leave alone. I'll

work. I'll teach at the school. I'll give my life to whomever may need it. Its autumn . . . almost winter; soon the snow will cover everything, but I'll be working, I'll work.

OLGA. (*Her arms around her sisters.*) Such happy music, so bold; it makes one want to live . . . Oh, God, time will pass, and we'll be gone, forever . . . we'll be forgotten; our faces and our voices: forgotten. Nobody will remember us; who we were, or how many. But our suffering will make a change: joy for those who come after us. There'll be happiness and peace on earth, and they'll say good things of those who live now, we'll be blessed. Oh my sisters, my dears, our lives aren't over yet. We have to live! Such happy music, so joyous! Just a little longer, and then we'll know why this life, why this suffering . . . If only we knew . . . If only we knew . . . (*Little by little the music gets further off. Kulygin, cheerful and smiling, brings the hat and the cape. Andrei pushes the baby carriage in which Bobik sits.*)

CHEBUTYKIN. (*Singing softly.*) Tarara boom dee-ay . . . just one more little day . . . (*Reading his newspaper.*) It's all the same, it doesn't matter to me; it's all the same . . .

OLGA. If only we knew! If only we knew!

CURTAIN

X FROM

SR TO SL

W/CARRIAGE

PROPERTY PLOT

ACT ONE

On Stage

Assorted living room furniture, including sofa, armchairs, tables, etc.
Dining table, and chairs, in hall behind living room
Pupils' notebooks (Olga)
Book (Masha)
Piano, with bench
Clock

Off Stage

Plates, glasses, silverware, linen, for dining table
Newspaper (Chebutykin)
Cake (Ferafont)
Silver samovar
Book (Kulygin)
Basket of flowers (Fedotik)
Camera (Fedotik)

Personal

Notebook and pencil (Chebutykin)
Small flask of perfume (Solyony)
Small picture frame (Irina)
Watch (Kulygin)
Spinning top (Fedotik)
Comb (Chebutykin)

ACT TWO

On Stage

Playing cards
Empty candy box
Small decanter of cognac
Brandy glasses

Off Stage

Candle, in holder (Natasha)
Book (Andrei)
Book and papers (Ferafont)

Samovar
Glasses, for tea
Letter (Anfisa)

Personal

Watch (Andrei)
Watch (Masha)
Pocket knife and colored pencils (Fedotik)

ACT THREE

On Stage

Beds (2) behind screens
Couch
Women's clothes, in closet
Hand bell
Water pitcher and glasses
Basin, for water
Small porcelain clock

Off Stage

Pillow (Masha)
Candle, in holder (Natasha)

Personal

Key (Olga)

ACT FOUR

On Stage

Table, with empty champagne bottle and glasses
Chair
Cane (Chebutykin)
Camera (Fedotik)
Swing
Bench
Water pitcher and glasses

Off Stage

Baby carriage
Papers (Ferapont)

Personal

Watch (Fedotik)
Notebook and pencil (Fedotik)

Watch (Chebutykin)
Watch (Tuzenbach)
Coins (Anfisa)
Watch (Vershinin)
False beard and moustache (Kulygin)

BACKGROUND OF THE PLAY

Anton Chekhov's The Three Sisters was first produced at the Moscow Art Theatre in^f 1901. The production was directed by Konstantin Stanislavsky, who, with Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko, founded the M.A.T. Chekhov's wife, Olga Knipper, played the role of Masha.

Stanislavsky wrote that Chekhov "was convinced that he had written a gay comedy, but at the [Moscow Art Theatre Company's first] reading everyone took the play for a drama and wept as they listened to it."¹ In response to this reaction, Chekhov repeated several times, "But what I wrote was a farce."² According to Stanislavsky, something that Chekhov "couldn't put up with until his dying day, was the fact that his The Three Sisters . . . was a tragedy of Russian life. He was sincerely convinced that it was a gay comedy, almost a farce."³

The play was not immediately popular with audiences. Stanislavsky describes the response the play received on its first night:

At the end of Act One . . . there were about a dozen shattering curtain-calls. After Act Two there was one. After the Third Act only a few people timidly applauded and the actors could not appear, and after Act Four they got one very thin curtain-call . . . It took a long time for Chekhov's art in this play to reach the theatre-goer.⁴

Despite any early negative reactions, The Three Sisters has become the most frequently revived play in Russian theat-

rical history , with well known productions by Nemirovich-Danchenko at the M.A.T. in 1940 and by Georgii Tovstonogov at the Gorky Theatre in 1965.

That Chekhov intended The Three Sisters to be a farce is a fact that revealed much to me about the depth of the play. I don't feel that the play can be pigeon-holed into any one category (ie. drama, comedy, farce, etc.). I would hesitate to call it a farce myself, but knowing that it was Chekhov's intention to write a farce indicated to me how high the level of Andrei's desperation should be. More specifically, what Chekhov's intention revealed to me was that Andrei is pathetic, so much so that he is almost (and sometimes is) funny.

This revelation was particularly valuable to me in Act III, where the comedic elements were not immediately apparent to me. When I finally saw what was humorous about this character in this situation, saying the things he is saying, I was able to get more in touch with the feeling of conflict that is going on inside him during the scene. Discovering what was funny about Andrei's situation helped me to identify with him. For me, it was the key to figuring out the rest of his emotional life.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE ROLE

Character Analysis

Who Am I?

Andrei Sergeevich Prozorov, son of Colonel Prozorov, brother of Olga, Masha and Irina.

What Time Is It?

The action of the play covers five years. At the start of the play it is Spring, 1899, specifically the fifth of May. Act II opens almost two years later, during the Winter of 1900-1901. Act III takes place in 1903, and in Act IV, it is about a year later, Autumn, 1904.

Where Am I?

Russia; a provincial town outside of Moscow.

What Are The Given Circumstances?

My family used to live in Moscow, on Old Basmanny Street. In 1888, when my father became a battery commander, he brought us here. I thought we would only stay in this remote suburb until my father retired, but when my mother died, things changed. When he retired, my father remained in this town, and I did, too. We all did, my sisters and I, despite our desire to return to Moscow. We wanted to return with him, but

he seemed to have lost interest in the idea-- in almost everything, it seemed. Until his death, he showed nothing but apathy at any suggestion of taking us back to Moscow.

During the year following my father's death, my sisters seemed to have nominated me the head of the household. Their unfulfilled expectations of our father, expectations which I shared with them, had been transferred to me. It aged me. It gave me an idea, too, of how my father must have felt under the weight of our demands.

Spending time with Natasha was the only way I had to escape the pressure. Being with her made me feel young again; she helped me to forget my troubles. The day she agreed to marry me, I felt that I had gotten the last piece of inspiration I needed to pursue my career as a professor at the University of Moscow. In retrospect, I sometimes think that I was fooling myself. Other times I think that I would have made it if things were just a little bit different; if only there was someone to stimulate me intellectually, for example.

What Is My Character's Relationship To Other Characters?

The death of our father has put a strain on my relationship with each of my sisters, although I don't know how aware they are of it, since I have tried to downplay my feelings. Returning to Moscow and becoming a professor has been my dream, and my sisters have always known that; but with father

gone, they are starting to give me the impression that they feel as if they have a stake in my dream.

Olga: My relationship with her deteriorates more than that of either Masha or Irina. As the play progresses, it gets harder for me to look at her. I can't fool her. I can fool myself with all of the rationalizations I have made, but I can't fool her. More than anyone else, Olga reminds me of how much everyone was counting on me to get us to Moscow. She is so sensitive, and there is increased tension between us because I have allowed Natasha to come in and take over, ultimately driving Olga out of the house. I'm constantly fighting the feeling that I've betrayed her and let her down.

Masha: Of all of my sisters, I have the most in common with Masha. For instance, she plays the piano, I play the violin. We are also both unhappy in our marriages. Consequently, I feel closest to her; I confide in her more. That Masha does not live in the house anymore is another thing that has made us close; I don't have the feeling of forced intimacy with her. But I argue with her more, too. Masha's affair with Vershinin is a sore spot between us, largely because the affair, along with Masha's disdain for her husband, is disturbingly similar to my own situation, about which, to some degree, I am in denial.

Irina: Since she is the youngest child, I believe that there is more of a chance to fix the damage to my relationship with her than with either Masha or Irina. There is an inno-

cence to my relationship with her, however imagined on my part. But she is not quite as naive as I like to think she is, and so there is always a distance between us.

Natasha: I really do love her, in spite of her overbearing personality, and what everyone (perhaps justifiably) thinks of her. For the sake of our children, I feel the need to be supportive of her, but I also think that, being her husband, I see a side of her that no one else does: a good side, a flash of what made me love her in the first place. My conviction in these beliefs, however, varies greatly from time to time.

Chebutykin: He and I have certain vices in common, drinking and gambling, and it has made us close. I don't feel as inadequate when we are together as I do with other people, because he doesn't judge me. Or if he does, he seems to judge me less harshly than others do. We like to agitate each other, make each other laugh.

Ferapont: I'm fond of him, but sometimes when I look at him I see my future, and it scares me. It makes me resent him, and so I occasionally lose my patience with him.

Superobjective; Spine Of The Character

To become a university professor. We all want to get to Moscow, but Moscow represents something distinctly different for each of us. When I dream of going to Moscow, I am (more specifically) dreaming of becoming a professor at the Univer-

sity of Moscow.

The play opens on a day of mixed emotion for the Prozorovs: It is the one year anniversary of Father's death, yet it is Irina's name day. Through Olga's comments we learn that a year ago, it was cold, with rain and snow; but that today, it is sunny and warm.⁶ This is symbolic of the effort that is being made by Olga, Irina and Masha to overcome the unhappiness of the past.

From this starting point, each of the main characters (with the exception of Natasha) is forced to give up on their dream. There is a pattern that exists in the play that is as follows: The Dream, Compromise of the Dream, followed by Disaster. The spine of my character, Andrei, follows this pattern. Andrei's downfall can be charted as follows: In Act I, his dream is seemingly still alive. (Ultimately, I believe that his dream is doomed from the start simply because of his own inertia. However, since Andrei doesn't come to this realization until much later in the play, it mustn't be telegraphed by the actor.) In Act II, he has compromised the dream somewhat, but he is not fully aware of the consequences of his compromise until it hits him at the end of his speech in Act III. In Act IV, he is beaten, his will is broken, he feels angry, cheated and submissive. Act IV is his disaster, because it is what he does until the day he dies.

Major Obstacles

Natasha is an obstacle for Andrei because she is a domineering and manipulative wife, but the real obstacle with regard to Natasha is that he does love her. This, in part, is what causes his lethargy, his paralysis. But his love for Natasha is only one of several obstacles that bring about this result.

Another is fear of failure. I believe that a prevailing thought in Andrei's mind is, "What if I go to Moscow, pursue my dream and fall short of it? What will I do then?" He is afraid of facing the rest of his life with the door to his dream having been shut forever.

A third obstacle is family obligations. His marriage to Natasha notwithstanding, the explicit and implicit responsibilities (for getting them to Moscow) heaped upon Andrei by his sisters have made him question whether he is adequately prepared to pursue his dream.

How Is The Character Like Me?

I can strongly identify with the frustration that Andrei feels at not being able to get anywhere in his career, even though I think that I am taking a much more active role in attempting to achieve my goals than he is. Although I am not as old as the character, I know the feeling of futility that comes with not having achieved-- and still being far from achieving-- what one expected to by a certain age.

I'm sure that Andrei believes he is doing all that he can do to move forward with his career, but he must also have moments of doubt, when he thinks that he is fooling himself by believing this. I have often, in my own mind, gone back and forth, from believing that I'm doing the best I can, that I'm really making some headway in my career, to thinking that I'm just spinning my wheels and not really accomplishing anything.

Andrei needs to believe that he is not fooling himself about his chances of becoming a university professor, otherwise he wouldn't be able to go on enduring the daily problems of his life. Unfortunately, he is fooling himself throughout, even though that should not be apparent until later in the play. Similarly, despite any moments of doubt I may have about my ability to become a professional working actor (or a university professor, or both), I need to believe that I am moving closer to achieving my goals, and that if I keep working at this pace I will get there. Maybe I'm fooling myself, too. Of course, I don't think that I am, but therein lies another similarity, neither does Andrei.

How Is The Character Different From Me?

Andrei is more likely to be manipulated by Natasha than I believe I would be. In fact, I think that I lean the other way almost to a fault. I am sometimes so concerned with protecting myself from becoming henpecked, that I sometimes perceive myself to be when I'm really not. I tend to be

worried that if I don't assert myself on a generally equal basis with the other person in the relationship, my will eventually will get lost in the shuffle. By comparison, Andrei is at first unconcerned about this possibility, diving head-first into the relationship and later unable to do anything to mitigate Natasha's domineering nature.

Andrei's attitude towards money is also different than mine. Gambling holds very little appeal for me, whereas it is a form of escape for Andrei, as is drinking. Andrei is more likely to indulge in his vices in order to avoid dealing with his problems. He has a much more addictive type of personality than I do.

Scene Analysis

Act I, scene 4

p.13-15. It is early afternoon, about twelve-fifteen, and I am in my room. I have just put down the book I had been reading and begun to play my violin when Masha calls me into the sitting room. I am preoccupied and would rather be left alone, but the cheerful atmosphere coming from the sitting room draws me in and forces me to consent to a certain degree of sociability. The presence of a stranger is also a contributing factor. I had heard the military men speak of a new battery commander, so when Masha introduces me to Colonel Vershinin, I figure that that's who he is.

Irina embarrasses me by showing the colonel the gift I had given her earlier, and then belabors the point by going on about me, clearly boring Alexander Ignatevich and ruining my attempt to make a quiet exit.

When Irina pulls me back into the room, Masha, Olga and finally Ivan Romanich tease me and embarrass me further. They know exactly what is on my mind and they are sure to announce it for the entire room to hear. They are doing it all in good fun, but it's not fun for me. Actually, it makes me feel like a fool.

Of course, I would never admit to them that they are right about my being "lovesick,"⁷ but thoughts of Natasha have indeed been a source of great distraction lately. Unable to escape, I explain my appearance by telling them that I was up all night reading. Alexander Ignatevich seems impressed at the degree of knowledge my sisters and I possess, so much so that he takes exception when Masha makes her obligatory comment that, "We know many useless things."⁸

The Colonel respectfully disagrees with Masha, stating his case quite eloquently. During his discourse, I started to get the feeling, which was confirmed to me by Masha's response, that there was some kind of strange energy between them. In any case, when the conversation drifts away from me, I go quietly back into my room.

Act I, scene 5 - 6

p.17-20. I stay in my room until lunch is ready. I know that Natasha is coming for lunch and I am both eager and nervous about seeing her. I have almost completely made up my mind to propose marriage; I'm just not sure when and how I will do it. When Olga calls for me to come out, I enter the sitting room half expecting Natasha to be there already. She has not arrived yet, however, and Ivan Romanich engages me in conversation as we take our seats at the table.

Natasha arrives just as we are sitting down, and takes her seat at the table next to me. I decide to propose to her

after lunch. I will excuse myself from the table, take Natasha for a walk in the garden and propose to her. I know that I can't suppress the impulse much longer than that.

The awkwardness I am feeling at the table is agony, and it gets even worse when Fyodor Ilych and Ivan Romanich start in with their teasing comments. My appeals to them to stop their agitating, at least for Natasha's sake, seem only to amuse and delight them even more.

Natasha runs from the table in tears, embarrassed by their comments. I go after her to console her, and seeing her in this vulnerable state makes me unable to contain myself any longer. I have to admit that I've never been more attracted to her than I am at this moment. My proposal trips out of my mouth, as much to my own surprise as it must have been to hers.

Act II, scene 1 - 2

p.21-23. It is a little after eight o'clock at night and I am in my room. Natasha is wandering around the house checking up on things. We have been married nearly two years and the novelty of playing "Lady of the Household" has not worn off for her; I'm beginning to wonder if it is ever going to.

I am engrossed in a book of old lectures when Natasha calls me from the sitting room. When I go in to see what she wants, I can tell she is leading up to something and I just want to escape the conversation with a minimal amount of

damage.

Natasha says she does not want the Maskers to come to-night as scheduled, because it would disturb Bobik, whom she says is not feeling well. I know that she is overreacting with regard to Bobik, and she thwarts any efforts on my part to explain to her that my sisters have the final say in matters like this. Rather than get further involved, I wash my hands of the situation, even though it will probably cause an explosion later. I just can't deal with it.

Natasha asserts herself even more by suggesting that Irina give up her room so that Bobik can sleep there. I am shocked that she would even make such a callous and insensitive suggestion, but I am powerless to stand up to her. After all, she is my wife, and she is only trying to do what's best for our child. Still, Olga, Masha, and particularly Irina will be in a rage when they hear about this, and I will be caught in the middle of another controversy. So much for escaping with minimal damage.

After experiencing such tension with Natasha, the sight of Ferapont is a welcome one by comparison. He has come to bring me work from the County Council, and the irony hits me that I am reduced to having this work actually be a source of relief to me. I had hoped to have become a professor by now, and I am no closer to becoming one than I was the day I proposed to Natasha. I'm farther away, in fact.

When I talk to him about how I miss Moscow, Ferapont goes

on about some odd things he has heard about Moscow; I am only half-listening. I dismiss him as I become immersed in the book he has brought me, and when I look up to remind him to come back in the morning, he is already gone. As I go back to my room, I laugh sadly at the irony of my situation, not only what just happened with Ferapont, but the irony of my life here, in this house.

Act II, scene 5 - 6

p.31-35. After a while, I can hear noise coming from the sitting room as I sit and read. I want to go out and maybe have a drink, but I'm not sure who is out there. I won't be able to relax if Natasha is among the group, and I certainly won't be able to have a drink. There is also the possibility that I'll be caught in the crossfire between her and my sisters, crossfire that probably won't take place if I am not present to be the catalyst for it. I call Anfisa into my study on some pretense and ask her who is in the sitting room, and based on her response I go in and join the group. Almost immediately, I become the mediator in the most heated (and trivial) of arguments between Ivan Romanich and Vasily Vasilevich. Solyoni's temperament is very unstable, and for a brief moment when we disagree about how many universities there are in Moscow, I think that he wants to kill me. Nevertheless, all share a laugh at his strange tirade, and the cheery atmosphere is starting to lift my spirits.

I see Natasha come into the room and whisper something to Ivan Romanich, and, remembering my earlier conversation with her, I know that the party is indeed over. I don't need to hear what she is saying to him: I know. For a moment, I think about getting out of the room quickly and discreetly so that I don't have to face Masha and Irina (especially Masha). But I hesitate; I can't bring myself to just slither away like that, and as I am trying to explain the situation in front of a house full of people, I can see out of the corner of my eye the flames shooting out of Masha's eyes. It's a futile situation; I give up. I have to get out of this house.

Ivan Romanich follows me into my study and suggests that we get out of the house for a while. Our drinking and gambling adventures have been a great outlet for me emotionally, if not financially, and had he not suggested it to me on this occasion, I would have begged him. The stress of my situation is even starting to affect me physically, and I need a break from it. This time, however, I resolve not to gamble. I just need to go out with Ivan Romanich, have a drink (I can't drink in front of Natasha) and be in a different atmosphere for a little while.

I end up gambling. I lose.

Act III, scene 4

p.45-47. It is two years later, about three o'clock in the morning. Natasha and Olga have become separate factions

within the household. Olga feels that Natasha has usurped her place in running the household, but is too sensitive to endure the battle to regain her position, while Natasha feels that, as my wife, it is her rightful place to behave as she does, as she is only acting in everyone's best interests. The problem has put a strain on my relationships with each of them. In my need to escape from time to time, I have accumulated a fairly large gambling debt, so much so, that I've been forced to mortgage our house. Earlier this evening, I told my sisters what I had done.

There has been a big fire in town, and the soldiers have gone to help fight it. I am in my room having a drink and playing the violin. I am a little bit drunk, but I want another drink. Since Natasha has taken my keys to the cupboard and hid them, I go to Olga's room to borrow her keys. By the time I come out of my study, most of the soldiers have returned, and I overhear one of them report that the fire is dying down.

Ferapont comes up to me and keeps repeating something to me over and over, but I am too preoccupied and distraught to listen. I try to ignore him, but he follows me all through the house, right into Olga's bedroom. I lash out at him in the presence of my sisters. I overreacted: he just wanted to get my permission for the firemen to pass through the garden.

I repeat to Olga, Masha and Irina the report that I heard of the fire dying down, a little ashamed that I didn't help in

fighting it, and hoping that maybe they wouldn't know that I never left my room. Olga gives me her keys after I explain that I've lost mine, but she does it with such a look of pity that I feel compelled to defend myself for my behavior this evening, for not becoming a professor, for marrying Natasha. For everything. In the midst of my explanations to her and to Irina (Masha has left), a wave of realization hits me that what I am saying is all lies, that my life (and especially my marriage) has been one rationalization after another, and that Olga is right to pity me.

Act IV, scene 2

p.52-54. It is the following Autumn. The brigade has been transferred and the soldiers are leaving today. I am in the garden with Sophie in her baby carriage, while Natasha is in the house with Protopopov. Natasha spends a lot of time with him, but she assures me that it is innocent. I want to believe her, and I don't think I could face it if she was being unfaithful. Still, the situation makes me feel like a cuckold. Ivan Romanich is sitting in the garden with Masha, and I go over to them hoping to get a chance to discuss this alone with him.

When Ivan Romanich says that he is leaving with the brigade, the horrible realization hits me that there will be no one in the house to help me take refuge from Natasha. It will be harder to escape. I'm also surprised at the casual-

ness with which he informs me and Masha that Solyoni and the Baron are going to fight a duel. I comment that duels are immoral, hoping that the discussion of morality which might ensue will induce Masha to excuse herself, leaving me alone with Ivan Romanich.

When Masha leaves, I explain to the doctor how I am feeling. I don't need to explain the specifics of the situation. He knows them, both from living in the house and from being my closest friend. At this moment, I am very much in need of his advice, and what he says leaves me in a state of shock:

I'm leaving tomorrow, my friend. We may never see each other again. So here's a piece of advice: take your hat and your walking stick, and go . . . Go, and don't look back. And the further you go, the better.⁹

He is gone before I can press him further, having been abruptly swept away to the duel by Solyoni. I actually consider following his advice, but just for a second. I soon realize that I could never do such a thing. It is just not practical, especially with a wife and two children. As I am lost in speculation, Ferapont interrupts me with papers to sign, and I realize all over again how trapped I really am.

Act IV, scene 5

p.55-57. I am pushing Sophie's carriage, trying to elude Ferapont, but soon I have to stop and address the strong feelings about my life that I'm experiencing. This life is

not what I had planned. I feel as if the house, the garden and the surrounding trees are mocking me just by being there. Ferapont's presence reminds me of the transformation I've undergone since the time when I dreamed of the future and what it would hold for me. I didn't think it would hold this. It can't be my fault that this is my fate: if it weren't for this backward town, and a wife who is so domineering . . .

This futile lifestyle will perpetuate itself, one generation after another, unless something is done to change it. My children will not live like this, not if I can help it.

My sisters are right, I made a mistake . . .

What I want in the scene is to assign blame for my fate. The obstacle is that there is no one to blame but myself. In the end, I realize this, and quietly accept my situation.

REHEARSAL JOURNAL

Tuesday, September 7, 1993; 6:30 PM

Tonight was our first read-through of the play. John Scheffler was there and showed us a model of the set. During the read-through, David stopped us a few times and offered some thoughts worth noting about Chekhov's life and the play:

- Tolstoy hated Chekhov's plays.
- Chekhov was born a peasant and died young, but was a success in his lifetime. He came from nothing and became a doctor and a writer. Chekhov said his life was a struggle to remove the peasant from inside him.
- According to David, Chekhov is saying through his writing (paraphrased), "My dear people, look at the way you live. It's terrible. Stop living this way."
- Because he was able to accomplish all that he did, Chekhov wanted the people around him to stop sitting around philosophizing, and do.
- Chekhov was always around people who couldn't help themselves; his brother was an alcoholic.
- According to his wife in his later life, Olga, he had a doctor's clinical detachment in his personality.
- Be aware of allusions to Russian literature in the play.
- Time is an important theme. Other important themes: Superfluous Man, Superfluous Knowledge.
- Be aware of the imagery of birds and trees in the text.

Thursday, September 9, 1993; 6:30 PM - 10:30 PM

We were scheduled to finish blocking all of Act I. For me that means about six and a half pages, Act I, scene 4, 5 and 6.

David's staging of my exit from scene 4 showed much to me about my character, perhaps more clearly than words would have. I like to get the blocking out of the way, even if it's confusing at first, because it can also reveal a lot about the director's image of the character.

Some people in the cast have complained privately that they are getting interpretive notes as well as blocking, that too much is being asked of them all at once. I can't say whether their gripe is a legitimate one, because I wasn't called for rehearsal last night and that was the rehearsal in question, but they definitely feel very strongly about it. I can only say that so far, after one rehearsal, it has not bothered me.

Friday, September 10, 1993; 7:45 PM - 10:45 PM

We worked through Act I. There's a moment with Chebutykin when he grabs me from behind, and the blocking didn't work very well for me last night. Tonight David pointed out to me that I need to react to Chebutykin physically (as well as verbally, which is all I had been doing) for the move to make sense. Now it works for me.

David said that this is a good role for me because I have the sensitive qualities of the character, but that right now

my playing is too contemporary. Speech and posture are two areas he said I should work on. He suggested that I wear an entire suit in rehearsal.

David and our costume designer are still deciding whether or not I will be padded.

Saturday, September 11, 1993; 2:30 PM - 5:00 PM

I wore the rehearsal clothes David suggested and I think it helped. Today's rehearsal was a fine tuning of Act I; we didn't cover any new ground. Some cast members are complaining only semi-privately that the constant stopping and starting is preventing them from finding real moments of interaction with each other. This may be true for the moment, but I think that there will still be plenty of time for that later on. Maybe I'm prejudiced: I like to work this way when I direct, so it usually doesn't bother me to be directed this way as well. In fact, I prefer it.

I have to begin to form more specific ideas about my feelings toward the other characters in the play, even the ones with whom I don't have much contact. The idea occurred to me today that Andrei is not particularly fond of Kulygin. Kulygin's remark at the table in Act I that Natasha "already has a nice little fiance" would seem callous and insensitive from Andrei's perspective, however well-intended it was. There is clearly a closeness between Andrei and Chebutykin, even though I also think that he sometimes really annoys Andrei.

Monday, September 13, 1993; 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM

David did something at the beginning of rehearsal that angered me. It would have been inappropriate as well as counterproductive to go on about it at rehearsal, so instead I'll go on about it here. We had just begun to block Act II, scene 1, between Andrei and Natasha. One of Natasha's lines to me is, "What time is it?" and my response is, "Eight-fifteen." In figuring out this moment for myself I thought that, considering the character's circumstances (he had been reading and lost in thought), I probably would need to consult my watch to find out the time. This, of course, is as opposed to being able to rattle off the correct time because I just checked it ten minutes ago. Granted, a minor point. But when I asked David about it, he condescendingly asked me "Did you read the play?"

I was stunned for a minute because I didn't know (and still don't) what I had said to give David the impression that I hadn't read the play. I would have understood a response like, "I can't think about such minor points right now," or "Ask me later, I'm working with Natasha right now," but certainly not "Did you read the play?" I took it personally. But all I said was, "Several times."

For the next few minutes while David worked with Trish, I wondered why he had said this to me; he never would have answered me like that if he was aware that I just wanted his input on a minor point. The only possible conclusion I came up with was that he must have misunderstood what I was asking

him. Although, if that was the case, I can't imagine what he thought I was asking him. I let it go, and it actually turned out to be a pretty good rehearsal (We blocked Act II, scenes 1 and 2.), but right after it happened I was burning. I felt like saying, "Yes, David, I've read The Three Sisters, as well as Antigone, Oedipus The King, Prometheus Bound, Agamemnon, The Clouds, The Two Gentlemen of Verona and A Flea In Her Ear and that's just this week. So if I'm a little fuzzy on details, especially this early in rehearsals, give me a break!"

Tuesday, September 14, 1993; 6:30 PM - 10:30 PM

I'm not in much of the scenes covered tonight, so I did a lot of sitting around. But it seems like a lot got done. The first half of the play is blocked.

Wednesday, September 15, 1993; 6:30 PM - 10:45 PM

We worked on Act II tonight, as we did last night. Denis has been asking me for the past few days what I think the nature of the relationship between Andrei and Tuzenbach is. I didn't really answer him until tonight. I told him that I think that they are friends and that Andrei likes Tuzenbach, but that they don't speak much, possibly because of Andrei's private nature.

I didn't agree with some of the things Denis said to me (voluntarily) about his character, but they were things that didn't concern me so I didn't say anything. However, with my apologies to Denis, and since he brought it up in the first

place, I'll explain my point of contention here.

Denis drew a parallel between Tuzenbach and Natasha as two outsiders to the family trying to get in: Where she had succeeded Tuzenbach was failing, and it bothers him.

Is getting into the family really an issue for Tuzenbach? And is he really in competition with Natasha? When I speculate on Natasha's possible reasons for wanting to marry Andrei, I think of incentives like social status, control, love, or a combination of these. By contrast, isn't Tuzenbach simply consumed by his love for Irina? Is he really motivated to think in terms of getting into the family? If so, by what? Certainly not social status; Denis himself pointed out that Tuzenbach comes from a good military family. In my opinion, his connection doesn't fit, but perhaps I misunderstood him. I've probably said too much about it; it doesn't affect me and I don't really think that it's any of my business.

Thursday, September 16, 1993; 12:30 PM - 5:00 PM

Act II, scene 2, between Andrei and Ferapont, is coming into focus, but it's happening very slowly. Every time I try to incorporate one element, I lose another. But each time we worked on the scene today I felt like we made a little progress. I'm off book for Act II, scene 1 and it would help scene 2 a great deal if I could get off book for that as well.

More important than the lines, though, are the beats for the scene, especially this one. I've had a more difficult time than usual finding the beats for this brief exchange with

Ferapont. And I have a lot of trouble memorizing lines before setting the beats. Many times I can't just sit down with the script and figure out the beats in sequential order; I have to get them from rehearsal. That started to happen today with Act II, scene 2. We worked the scene over and over several times, and beats started to pop up and become clear.

I had a conversation with Maryanne about the relationship between Olga and Andrei. Andrei's relationships with his sisters deteriorate as the play progresses largely because, as Maryanne said, they are all waiting for him to get them to Moscow. We also are both unsure which of our characters is older. The script only implies that Andrei is the oldest, so technically it can be the director's decision. I asked David; Andrei is the oldest.

Friday, September 17, 1993; 11:30 AM - 2:30 AM

We returned to Act I today, having not touched it in about a week. Gary tried not using his script and, although he struggled with the lines and told me he felt terrible, I think it's good that he did. He said he felt like he was holding everybody up but I think the opposite is true. By attempting to get away from the script, I think he's pushing us forward. I sensed that some people took the cue from Gary to move to this next stage. I know I did. Even though I didn't feel ready, I thought to myself, "He has more lines than I do and he's trying it, so why don't I?" So I did. And even though I struggled too, I made some progress in my first

scene largely because I wasn't holding the script.

David told me that Andrei's first scene has to have more of a lamenting quality about this big project he has undertaken (translating the book).⁵ I think I know what he wants. My father has a tendency to walk around the house with an air similar to what David described. Maybe I'll use that.

Saturday, September 18, 1993 12:30 PM - 4:30 PM

We worked through Act II today. In Act II, scene 1, Trish has been having a problem with part of the scene. I sensed that the reason she was having the problem was because I've been turning my back to her as she spoke to me. I was doing this because my response to Natasha is, "I was thinking about something else. Anyway I have nothing to say." I instinctively thought that it would be difficult to justify facing her as she spoke and then responding with such a line. Well, I guess sometimes you have to be aware of what your instincts tell you and then do the opposite thing, because as soon as I faced her the section felt better. It seemed to increase the margin of her victory in their power struggle, which feels right.

When I worked as a production assistant at Manhattan Theatre Club, Joan Copeland told me about a problem she was having in a scene with another actress, and she said something to me that stuck in my memory: "There is very little that a good actor can't justify on stage. So if the other actor wants you to make some adjustment, do it."

Monday, September 20, 1993; 9:45 PM - 10:30 PM

Act III was blocked tonight, which is why I wasn't called until nine forty-five. I'm only in the last scene of the act which, according to David's breakdown, is Act III, scene 4.

I think this scene, where Andrei comes in and confronts Olga and Irina, is very challenging. It has some very emotional moments and is also full of challenging transitions. Not only is there the confrontation, but also the moment of realization when he can no longer deny Natasha's domineering nature. I felt I had my work cut out for me.

When we began working, I was insulted and inhibited by the way David spoke to me. Without any justification, he behaved as if he was going to have to drag the scene out of me against my will, saying things like "If I have to kill you, Michael, you're going to break down in tears. Real tears!" He asked me again whether I had read the play, and I got an infuriating feeling that he was only half-kidding. What is it in his experience with me that gives David the impression that he should speak to me this way?

David's attitude tonight really bothers me, but part of the reason it bothers me so much is that I think the problem goes beyond this incident. This is not just something between me and David. I think that tonight's incident is indicative of how I have been perceived throughout my two years in the program. Many people have clearly mistaken my comedic acting ability for a lack of seriousness as an actor, and in the process done me a gross injustice. I am very serious, as an

actor, as a director, as a teacher and as a person. In fact, the people that really know me, and know my work habits as an actor/director, tell me that I'm too serious. I've given many directors and faculty members at Brooklyn College the opportunity to know me this well; few have taken me up on it.

My reaction to the situation up until now has been largely to ignore it; I don't know what else to do. But I no longer feel like this is the best approach, because I'm starting to feel singled out. Everyone makes mistakes, including me, but I've never heard any of my fellow graduate actors spoken to with such open disrespect. I think I've done some good work since coming to Brooklyn College, work that I thought should speak for itself a little more, but instead has gone somewhat unnoticed.

I feel that I have not gotten the respect that I deserve from many people who have received it from me. I know it isn't my imagination, because several people with whom I do share a mutual respect have commented to me about it. When I think of these others who have noticed it as well, I realize that most of them are my fellow second year M.F.A. actors, the people with whom I have the closest contact and who know me better than most other people in the department. Interesting.

I think that you can't just tell people to respect you and have it happen. You have to earn it, by doing your work, by preparing, by being a good actor. My problem is, I've done these things, and I suppose I'll continue to do them, with or without an appropriate degree of respect and recognition.

Tuesday, September 21, 1993; 9:00 PM - 10:30 PM

Rehearsal was not a fun place for me tonight. I got there at about eight-thirty, only to find out that I had misread the schedule and was also supposed to have been there from six-thirty to seven-fifteen as well. Denise told me that when I didn't show up she was surprised, and said so, because I'm so anal that I would never be uninformed about the rehearsal schedule. She's right; I never make those kind of mistakes. Well, almost never.

Once again we worked through Act III, which is pretty much what we're doing this whole week. (We start Act IV on Thursday.) We ran through Act III, scene 4 twice; it's not focused right now, but I do think I'm moving forward with it. David even seemed pleased (and a bit surprised!) with my work.

Roger Babb, who has been filling in for F. Murray Abraham, has been talking (in class) about working from the outside in, adjusting your breathing and other physical conditions to that of the character in the situation, and using that as the starting point for your acting. This is how I have been approaching the emotional demands of Andrei's monologue. I mention this because I know that it's different from David's approach, and I hope it doesn't cause a problem. I don't anticipate one, because I'm willing to try both ways, and I'm sure David would realize that in the end I should do whatever works better for me. I probably will end up using a combination of both. For example, it's likely that once I get the physical action going, it will at some point trigger an

emotional connection from my life that I can use. When I try to think of a personal emotional connection beforehand it usually feels artificial to me.

I didn't intend to say anything to David about last night. I didn't want a confrontation about it; I figured it would just come up when it came up. And then it came up.

Rehearsal was over and Jennifer and I were about to walk to the parking lot together, and then suddenly I told Jen to go ahead without me. I could tell that she knew why. From that moment on, my actions felt almost involuntary. It was as if I instinctively knew that now was the time to start standing up for myself and address this problem. I didn't yell or carry on, but I think David saw how troubled I was and how important to me it was to say what I had to say. I told him that I was hurt by his behavior and that I didn't expect it from him. I had always thought of David as an ally. I had with me a copy of my journal entries from yesterday and from September thirteenth which I was going to show Marge. Instead, I gave them to David and told him that they would explain my point of view better than I could. He said he would read them and then we'll talk.

As I drove home, I was feeling a rush of adrenaline, still surprised that I had spoken up, but glad that I did.

Wednesday, September 22, 1993; 9:30 PM - 10:30 PM

Last night I messed up, tonight David did. I was on the schedule from six-thirty to seven o'clock and also from nine-

thirty to ten-thirty, but when I got there at the earlier time, David said he only meant to call me from nine-thirty to ten-thirty. He called me at home during the day to let me know, but I wasn't home and didn't check my messages. Even though David's mistake caused a three-hour gap in my schedule, it was a relief, after last night, that the mistake was his and not mine.

I'm sitting at rehearsal as I write this. It's about eight o'clock so I have some free time. I still don't know what David's reaction to my rehearsal journal excerpts will be. I hope he understands. Either way, I've said my piece and I just want to be done with it.

Rehearsal is over now. The stopping and starting affected me tonight. I wasn't as satisfied with Act III, scene 4 as I was last night. I was watching Act III, scene 3, and I thought they were really cooking tonight, particularly Denise. It helped motivate me for my scene. But by the time we got to my scene it was about an hour later, and the boost I got from watching them was gone. I peaked too early. I hope that when we start doing run-throughs I'll be better able to channel this energy into my scenes.

Thursday, September 23, 1993; 6:30 PM - 10:30 PM

First comes love, then comes marriage, then comes Andrei with the baby carriage. We began blocking Act IV tonight, covering scenes 1 through 3. And it was our first rehearsal on the stage. I felt like I was screaming my lines, but I got

a note that I wasn't loud enough. This is usually not a problem for me. I think I just need to adjust to the new space.

When we were working^f on Act II, scene 2 (between Andrei and Ferapont) last week, I got a note from David to make more of an attempt (as the character) to recognize the irony of my situation. When he gave me the note, David also speculated about the possibility that Andrei doesn't know about Natasha's affair with Protopopov when he talks in Act IV about wives deceiving their husbands, that he's possibly referring only to Masha and Vershinin. Now that we're up to that part of the play, I asked him about it again. He said that we don't have to decide now, but I think the more interesting choice is that Andrei does know about Natasha's ongoing affair and does nothing. If Andrei knows, the fact that he stays and stands for it is more interesting and pathetic. Actually, tonight I got the impression that David feels this way too; I think his speculation last week was just that -- speculation. However, whether or not Andrei knows that Protopopov is most likely the father of Sophie is another question. Has Andrei even considered the possibility? And if so, to what degree? Of this, I am not yet sure, but my feeling right now is that he doesn't know.

I went for my costume fitting today. They've decided to give me padding, although my costume is just bulky enough that it might not even be seen. It will, however, help keep my pants up. I'm still not sure what facial hair they want me to

have. Andrea, the costume designer, is going to give me copies of some pictures to take with me when I get my hair cut. I'll go early next week (and not a minute too soon!).

Friday, September 24, 1993; 7:00 PM - 10:40 PM

This is going to be a short entry for two reasons: rehearsal was pretty uneventful tonight and my head is pounding. David blocked the remaining scenes in Act IV, scenes 4 - 6. Now that the entire play is blocked, we have to be off book for each section by the next time we work on it. That means being off book for Act I by Tuesday, Act II by Wednesday, Act III by Thursday, and Act IV by next Friday.

I got those pictures of hairstyles from Andrea. I think I'll ask her if I can just leave my hair as it is. It was actually my idea to get a haircut before the show, but I've changed my mind. I'll get one if they really want me to, but if they're leaving it up to me I'd rather not. Andrea also told me not to shave.

Saturday, September 25, 1993; 12:30 PM - 4:00 PM

People missing rehearsal has been a major problem this week. Today we were scheduled to work through Act IV, and we were missing Solyony (Yom Kippur), Chebutykin (Yom Kippur), and Tuzenbach (sick). I have not been affected much by the absences in that most of the people I interact with have been there. But I have been affected in the sense that people are getting angry around me and I feel their tension. Denise has

been the most affected; as Irina she has scenes with Denis (Tuzenbach), Dan (Solyony) and Rory (Chebutykin) in Act IV. Morale has seen better days. Even though I think some of my fellow cast members sometimes overreact and get more upset than they should, I almost wish I was that way, too, because I have seen their passion about things offstage occasionally color what they do onstage.

David has been hesitant to lay into me, but he's been telling me as diplomatically as he can that he needs more, emotionally, from me. He's probably right. But it will be there. It has been my experience that I am a late bloomer in the rehearsal process. I don't know why I'm this way, I would prefer not to be. I do know that regardless of how it may be perceived, it isn't from lack of effort.

I've sensed that since Wednesday David has been tiptoeing around me a bit. I think I have this impression because, although his attitude toward me seemed more enlightened since reading my journal excerpts, he has never actually told me what his reaction was. And I never asked. But I was becoming unsure about where we stand with each other, and after he gave me the note that he needs more, emotionally, from me, I was starting to doubt myself. So I asked him about it.

Although I wasn't thrilled by everything he said, I think talking to him helped me. When we did my scene (Act IV, scene 5) again, I felt more connected to the emotional life of the character. David said it went well, and it felt good to me, so I feel a little better. In our talk, David said that he

thinks this role can be the best thing I've ever done. It was good to hear him say that. I think so, too, but I haven't felt that way lately.

Monday, September 27, 1993; 6:30 PM - 10:30 PM

There is always one line that gives me a terrible problem at a crucial point in a scene. I have one in Act IV, scene 5. We worked through Act IV tonight and I was almost completely off book. But there was that one problem area.

Besides the line problem in Act IV, scene 5, the personal connection that was starting to develop was not there tonight. There is a point where Andrei becomes very emotional, when he says, "My sisters! My darling, my wonderful sisters! Masha . . . my sister! . . .", and tonight it felt forced and unnatural. I think that this was partially due to struggling with the lines, but it also has to do with a choice I tried in the monologue leading up to this moment that didn't work. I let some anger at the character's situation come through. While I don't think this is necessarily wrong, it shouldn't be at the expense of the emotional vulnerability, and tonight it was. In order to be moved to tears by the end of in the scene, it has to build during the monologue; otherwise I get to the end of the scene and the foundation isn't there.

Tuesday, September 28, 1993; 7:30 PM - 10:30 PM

Tonight we worked through Act I scene by scene, and then we ran it. I asked Gary, who as Vershinin is on stage in Act

I much more than I am, how the scenes felt to him. "Young." I know what he means. Each time we do a section of the play I'm still finding new little things. And now it's getting frustrating to just get one or two cracks at each scene per night. It makes you want to make the most of your opportunities. Our preview is two weeks from tomorrow.

After I got through each of my scenes without calling for any lines I felt more relaxed. Then, when we went back to those scenes, I wasn't afraid to hold for a moment until the line came to me or call for it. I feel like I'm pretty much off book, but (of course) not up to performance level just yet.

I didn't get many notes tonight. I have a mental block with the section of lines at the very end of the act (when Andrei proposes to Natasha) and David noticed it. He said that it's coming along fine otherwise. I agree. The lines held me back tonight. Why is it that the two areas in the script where my brain vapor locks (this section and the end of Act IV, scene 5) both happen to be hot emotional moments? Is there a connection? Maybe. But my monologue in Act III is just as emotionally demanding (if not more), and I memorized that in a snap. Who knows?

So far, I think we have been an exceptionally friendly cast. There don't seem to be any cliques; I certainly don't belong to one, nor have I observed the formation of any.

I got my hair cut today for the show. People seemed to like it. I like it. My hair grows fast, though; I hope I

didn't get it cut too soon.

Wednesday, September 29, 1993; 8:00 PM - 10:30 PM

Tonight we worked through all of the scenes in Act II, but not in order. Some of the actors had to be in class until eight o'clock, which David had not anticipated when he made out the schedule, so he had to juggle some of the scenes around.

The blocking for Act II, scene 2 (between Andrei and Ferapont) worked fine when we rehearsed it downstairs in room 022. But once we did it on the actual set we found out that I am totally blocked by the scenery from almost a third of the audience. David tried moving the scene to the other end of the long dining room table, then to the middle of it. No good. He wanted to find a way to keep the scene upstage at the table. But no matter where he placed it, I would have been blocked from part of the audience. I suggested doing the scene moving downstage right to the sofa instead of upstage to the table. I asked Keith (who is playing Ferapont) to run the scene with me and I tried the moves, both to show David and to try them for myself. The scene felt much better this way. The comedy also started to work a bit more, because we're starting to become more tuned in to each other. We're still just getting to know each other, but Keith has been great to work with on stage. David agreed that my "solution" would work, even though he initially "wanted to use more of the stage." I have to admit that, at the time, it boosted my ego

to have David use my suggestion. And in front of everybody, too; although I don't know if anyone even noticed.

Tonight was a long rehearsal. Because of the odd schedule, many people had long^f breaks and there was a lot of standing around. We didn't even finish until about ten-forty-five. As a result, at about ten o'clock, some of us started to get silly. Then, as if we needed an excuse, something very strange and very funny happened. In Act II, scene 5, Anfisa is supposed to hand a note to Vershinin. We have a few napkins in the prop closet which have served as the note in rehearsal. The napkin that was used tonight had something written on it, which had probably been on there for weeks. It said "Help me! -Bobik" (Bobik is the name of Natasha's and Andrei's baby). When Gary (who plays Vershinin) came offstage and showed everyone the note, we fell on the floor laughing.

I had mixed feelings when I learned that the prevailing opinion was that I was the one who had written the note. In one sense, I got a kick out of it because it was hysterically funny, and people were giving me credit for it, which I would be glad to accept. But in another sense, I was mildly frustrated, because I really didn't do it and nobody believed me. Regardless, I didn't feel that it was important to prove my innocence, so I just let people think what they wanted to think.

Thursday, September 30, 1993; 8:00 PM - 10:15 PM

Tonight we worked on Act III. My monologue in the last

scene of the act is still giving me problems, but I think I'm making progress with it. I don't feel like I'm wandering aimlessly anymore; I seem to have stabilized my physical movement on my own. I also may have solved a problem relating to the emotional transition at the end of the monologue. There is a point where I need to be overcome by emotion, and I have been skipping the line right at the point where I have chosen to make the transition into it. Maybe that's why it has always seemed to fly by too fast. I was so angry when I realized it because it wasn't until after I had done the scene for the last time. I hope this is the answer. I'll have to wait until Saturday (our first full run-through) to find out.

Friday, October 1, 1993; 6:30 PM - 10:30 PM

My scenes in Act IV (which we worked on tonight) feel better each time I do them. I finally feel like I'm moving forward. David isn't giving tonight's notes until tomorrow, so I don't know what his reaction was. Tonight may have been the last night of working through scene by scene.

My biggest problem tonight is one that I've been ignoring for about five days hoping it would go away. So far, it hasn't. My throat is starting to hurt, a little more each day. I hope I'm not getting sick. Maybe it will go away if I just drink a lot of orange juice and get more sleep.

Saturday, October 2, 1993; 11:00 AM - 4:00 PM

The run-through was about three hours. I couldn't tell

if it went well overall, but I was personally satisfied, mainly because I corrected some problems I had been having.

Strangely, my more challenging scenes went well, while the ones that I consider to be less challenging didn't. For example, I felt like I rushed through Act I, scene 4 (Andrei's first scene). It wasn't focused. David gave a general note to everyone in the scene to "keep the conversational feeling of give and take going." He was actually referring to the scene just prior to my entrance, but I think that it's something I should be aware of, too.

I need to work on the end of Act I. I'm still struggling with the lines at the end of the scene, and it's distracting me from what should be my main focus: Natasha, and wanting to take care of her.

I went totally blank at the top of Act II. I stood in the stage left wing trying to remember what it is that I do in the act. As I was thinking, I saw Natasha on stage about to say the line that is my cue to enter, from stage right! I ran to the stage right wing to get ready to enter, but I forgot to take the book that I'm supposed to have with me from the stage left prop table. I started to run back to stage left, but halfway there I realized I wouldn't make it. I looked around where I was standing (which was somewhere behind the back wall) for a book -- any book -- and I saw a copy of our script. I grabbed it and started to run, but Jennifer whisper-screamed "No!" It was hers. I asked her "Do you need it?" but what I was really saying to her was "You don't need

it as much as I do!" "Go ahead," she said, and I just made it, albeit with the wrong book. I was glad Jen had let me take it; the wrong book was better than no book at all.

This book business reminds me: What is written in Andrei's book, which is referred to in the script as "old university courses"? I originally thought (and David suggested) that it was a book describing different college courses, like the ones that might be used by students when they register for classes. But I've read some essays that imply that it is a book of science lectures. This makes more sense.

My monologue in Act III was better today. What made it better was that I took more time, gave each thought its full value. I remembered the lines where I make the transition and that was a big part of it. I'll probably never forget those lines again.

Act IV went well for me, too. It occurred to me that I should attempt to hide my sorrow from Natasha when she comes out and says, "Who's out there talking so loud? . . ."

David gave me a note (from yesterday's rehearsal) that what I'm doing internally before starting my monologue in Act IV is not reading; it just looks like a pause for no reason. I moved the pause (that is, the thought that creates the pause) from just before the monologue to the first beat change of the monologue, just a couple of lines in, and it worked much better. It even created a nice little moment between Andrei and Ferapont that I think probably does read.

Monday, October 4, 1993; 6:30 PM - 10:45 PM

"Anyone who's done it falls in love with it." That's what F. Murray Abraham said this afternoon in class about performing Chekhov. He said that although he doesn't know why it translates so beautifully from Russian to English, there are so many parallels to our own society and our own personal lives that we understand the feelings that these characters, these "volcanic" people felt.

Today was our first class with Murray, and I didn't know exactly what to expect. As I watched him work with people, I gradually realized what a powerful presence he is. As everyone worked, he seemed to get excited about each person individually, and I believe it affected their work. It certainly affected mine.

When it was my turn, I did my Act IV monologue. Murray pointed out two things. The first was that the speech has three sets of lists, and if I deliver all three the same way, the audience will stop listening to me. I had been trying to break them up, but what I was doing did feel rather haphazard. There's a line where Andrei says, "Why is it that when we begin to grow up we become boring, and dull, and insignificant, lazy, callous, useless and miserable?" Murray suggested that I say each as if it were the only, or the last thing I was going to say, in effect tricking the audience. Even though this suggestion produced good results in class, I'm not sure if it would work in the context of the show, or even if David wants me to do it. Now that I think about it, it pro-

bably wouldn't and he probably doesn't.

The other thing Murray suggested was to begin the speech as if I didn't intend to say that much, and that it just trips out unexpectedly. Both of these suggestions seem related to the idea of "not knowing" when acting, which he talked about in class today.

I tried the monologue a second time, incorporating Murray's suggestions. I was much more in the moment because of these simple adjustments. He pushed all the right buttons with me. With everyone, it seemed. It's like he reaches right down your throat and pulls out the good acting.

Of course, when I did the scene tonight at rehearsal, the monologue wasn't as good. I didn't want to try to reproduce or copy what I'd done earlier; I got there organically once, so I can do it again, right? Maybe, but not tonight. Actually, the only part that wasn't there tonight was the beginning, the build, the first two beats, to be exact. That was the key to what I'd done in class, too. The rest of it was fine.

Trish thinks our scene at the end of Act I needs work. I think she's right, and I know David thinks so, too. He'll probably work on it with us on Thursday.

Here's something that didn't fully hit me until tonight. In Act II, Tuzenbach asks Irina, "When are the maskers coming?" and she replies, "They said at nine; it must be time." Andrei is standing right there and he knows they won't be received (because of Natasha). I don't know what (if any) effect this has on him; it's such a subtle thing. I think he

hears it, but it happens so fast that showing any acknowledgment of hearing it would seem to me to smack of indication.

That whole section where Tuzenbach, Andrei and Chebutykin sing "My little porch, made of wood . . ." is still very weird and uncomfortable. We're singing some random melody that I'm not even sure of. I'm not even sure if it has been the same melody each time, and the movement feels very awkward. Somehow, Denis always ends up on my right, and I have to make some weird kind of move around him, while singing my line and dancing in order to end up in the correct spot.

David gave me a note on my Act III monologue: "Don't force yourself to cry. If it's not there it's not there. [You can] kick me, but don't force yourself." I'm trying not to. Sometimes doing the physical takes me there emotionally. Tonight it didn't.

Tuesday, October 5, 1993; 6:30 PM - 10:30 PM

A problem that is getting a lot of cast members angry is that very often a ten minute break becomes a half hour break; it happened tonight. This usually doesn't bug me as much as it bugs other people, but what made it particularly annoying tonight was that when they finally started, no one let us know. Every single cast member was standing in the stage left wing waiting for "places" to be called. We were just hanging out and all of a sudden we hear David scream from the house "Quiet!" That was our "places" call for Act III.

In my opinion, that's the stage manager's mistake. The

Act III music was already playing and not one person knew that we had started. I like Susan, but she has got to remember to call "places" before going with the scene.

After tonight's run-through, I felt for the first time that if we had an audience tomorrow, even though my performance would be very rough and unfinished, I would be able to get through it. It's important to get to that point with as many rehearsal days to spare as possible. Now that I've learned the part, I have seven days to get it ready.

David's notes:

Act II, scene 2: Hold the book (of "old university courses") through the entire scene, and get to the sofa earlier. I had been moving down on "Today, idly, out of boredom, . . ." I'll try moving after Ferapont says, "They said, 'The master is busy.'"

Act III, scene 4: Enter the room with the purpose of finding Olga. I had been, but not tonight. I think I forgot this simple thing last night, too.

Act III, scene 4: Don't push as much when delivering the lines after Kulygin has come in: "They're not listening to me. Natasha is an excellent woman, . . ."

Act IV, scene 5: Begin the monologue talking to Ferapont, then move away from him. This is the first way we tried it and it was no good. But now Keith and I are playing off of each other much more, so maybe it will work better.

David also said to tighten the beginning of the monologue. Right now the show runs two hours and forty-five

minutes, and David is looking for places to cut that down.

Wednesday, October 6, 1993; 6:30 PM - 10:30 PM

Murray scheduled individual meetings with all the people in his class, and mine was this afternoon. I worked on my Act IV monologue with him outside; I don't think I've ever done that before: acting outdoors. We used the grass at the back of the amphitheater, and he helped me discover a few things.

The beat where Andrei says, "I used to be young, and full of joy" could be happy, as if he's reliving his youth. Doing it that way gives it another color, and it gives me another place to go with it.

I also discovered a place where I want to move to Ferapont, or at least bring my focus back to him from where it is, which is out. The place in the speech I'm referring to is when Andrei says ". . . and when they want to entertain themselves because they're afraid of dying of boredom, they drown in malicious gossip,"

Murray noted some of the places where he believes the humor lies. He thinks "What happened?" can be a funny line. I see what he means. He pointed out the humor and irony in Andrei, a man in his mid-thirties telling Ferapont, and old man, "I used to be young,"

Even more important than Murray's suggestions was the experience of working outside, which helped to remind me to keep relating to the environment.

I also have to keep relating to the baby. Making the

baby real for myself has been a problem for me, partially because I have no idea what kind of prop I'm going to be working with, even though I was told I would have it by now. I don't want to use that as an excuse (I still have to do the work.), but it does make it harder. Murray even said, "They have got to give you something better to rehearse with than a folding chair."

David's notes:

Act I, scene 6: He couldn't hear me at the end of Act I.

Act II, scene 2: "Come tomorrow morning, you'll take back these papers." Say the line sooner in order to get the laugh.

Why doesn't this bit work? I understand what the joke is. What's going wrong in the execution of it? Maybe it just isn't going to work until I stop worrying about it, although I wasn't worried about it tonight. Actually, I thought it went well. Maybe it works already and we don't know it. Maybe it will never work.

Act II, scene 2: Take a moment before "So that's how it is." I felt that I rushed this a little tonight. David also said to "look around. It's different. There should be a sadness."

Act IV, scene 5: Tighten up the monologue; there are too many pauses.

Thursday, October 7, 1993; 7:00 PM - 8:15 PM

John Scheffler was painting the floor of the stage to-

night, so rehearsal was held downstairs in room 022. It was a short night for me. David worked through scenes in Acts I and II that needed work. Trish and I finally got to work on the end of Act I, and I feel better about it.

Friday, October 8, 1993; 6:30 PM - 10:30 PM

Before tonight's run-through, I asked David to remind me of what he wanted me to do with the Act IV monologue. Right now, it is coming out too "acidic," and it needs more of an ironic quality. In the run-through, I didn't push, and I was more conscious of the irony of my situation, as the character. I accidentally mixed up the sequence of some of the lines, and that took me out of the scene a little.

There is a point in Act II where I call from off stage, "Anfisa!". As I sat in the stage right wing waiting for my cue, my mind started to wander. Suddenly, I noticed that there was silence on stage. I looked up and saw Terry, who plays Anfisa, standing on stage, but not where she usually is. What I didn't know was that there was a silence because Gary was just taking a dramatic pause, and Anfisa wasn't where she usually is because it was not time for my line yet. But I naturally assumed that if there's a pause then somebody must have forgotten a line, and if somebody has forgotten a line then it must be me. I thought, "Damn! I missed it!" and I jumped up and yelled "Anfisa!", almost half a page early.

David's notes:

Act III, scene 4: Now that the screens are up around the

beds, play the scene more center. Just move off a little to one side when Kulygin comes on.

I had been using both the downstage left and right corners for much of the monologue. David also wants me to start to use the idea again of doing some of the monologue totally facing upstage.

Act IV, scene 5: Come right in with my line, "Everything is so disgusting . . .". Don't pause. I hadn't paused, I'd gone up. This moment comes right after the monologue, and it always feels strange to me. For just a second, I'm not sure exactly what's going on, and so my brain vapor locks. When I fix this glitch in my acting "score", the line problem will take care of itself.

Rory, Jennifer, Marshall, Denise and I went to the Floridian Diner after rehearsal. Jen and I initiated the idea and I'm glad we did. I enjoyed everyone's company; we had a lot of laughs with each other.

Sunday, October 10, 1993; 12:30 PM - 10:00 PM

Today was our tech rehearsal. We were supposed to do a cue-to-cue and then a run-through, but rehearsal was delayed when the girl who was supposed to run sound never showed up. They had waited for her for a few hours, too. We didn't begin the cue-to-cue until about four-forty-five, and we didn't get to do the run-through.

About two weeks ago, I asked our stage manager, Susan, when I could start rehearsing with the actual baby carriage

that I'm going to use in the performances. She told me that I could have it by the following Monday, which was September twenty-seventh. It arrived today, and it's very different from the folding chair with which I have been rehearsing.

Monday, October 11, 1993; 5:00 PM - 10:30PM

Our first dress rehearsal went pretty well. David isn't giving us our notes until tomorrow, but he said that his overall feeling was a positive one.

I found another dead spot in my subtext, or my acting "score," that I have to fix. There is a line I say in Act I, "Stop. Gentlemen, aren't you tired of that yet?" in response to a joke made by Chebutykin at Andrei's and Natasha's expense, which makes others at the table laugh. I have been saying it to no one in particular, and I always seem to end up looking at Vershinin. Directing any of it to him makes no sense, of course, because our characters just met and Vershinin is not even one of the people who laughs at Chebutykin's joke. I want to address the line to Chebutykin and Kulygin specifically, but Kulygin is at the opposite end of the table, just too far away. I'll notice Solyoni's reaction to the joke next time and direct the line to him and Chebutykin, since they are both near me. I don't even know if it will look any different than what I've been doing, but that's not the point. The point is that I have to know to whom I'm talking and what I'm doing, and be definite about it.

Edmund pointed out, in his own unique way, that my put-

ting the candle on the sofa in Act II, scene 2 looks very strange. No one would ever put a lit candle on a sofa, he said. Even if it didn't tip over and set the sofa on fire, it would certainly get wax all over the seat cushion. I think he's got a point. I'll see if David thinks so, too.

John Scheffler isn't happy with the baby carriage. David told me that he's going to get a different one.

Our first performance before an audience is less than forty-eight hours away.

Tuesday, October 12, 1993; 7:00 PM - 11:30 PM

My entire costume was changed today. Becky and/or Andrea decided that what I was wearing was too bulky. They said that you couldn't tell if I was fat or if I was just wearing clothes that made me look frumpy. Well, I'm no costume designer, but I could have told them that when I first tried it on (see my entry for September twenty-fourth, last paragraph). They also said the old costume made me look short (Funny, I always thought it was my height that made me look short.), and that they didn't like the color.

Becky asked me today when I was getting my hair cut for the show(!). I told her I had gotten it cut already, and she said that it's still too long. She asked me if I would be willing to cut it again and I said sure, I just wouldn't be willing to pay for another haircut. My hair is the way it is only because I did exactly what both Becky and Andrea told me to do with it. Two weeks ago, when I picked up the sketches

of hairstyles, Becky said to me, "If you're not sure, better to leave it too long than to get it cut too short." Andrea said the same thing (see Appendix D). It seems that too often you make an attempt to cooperate, and the very people with whom you're trying to cooperate think you're trying to make problems for them.

I'm supposed to have a handkerchief in Act I, scene 4. It's not essential, but it's in the script and David said he wanted me to use it. I've always had a rehearsal prop for it. Now that we're into the dress rehearsals, the prop people say that it is a costume item, and they're right. But I absolutely cannot get a straight answer from anyone in the costume department about it.

The prop people told me that the costume people said that they're getting me a handkerchief, but when Edmund overheard the conversation, he said, "If it's not essential we're not going to give it to you." Is the costume department directing the show now?

Edmund also said to me, "Do you really need it?" and "Does the script call for it?" Why is he asking me these questions? If he doesn't want to give me a handkerchief, he should ask the director to cut it. I personally don't care whether I have it or not; I'm just trying to do what the director has set. From now on, though, I'm just going to work without it. If David wants me to use it, let him fight with Edmund.

I did get some information from Becky this afternoon that

I found helpful. She told me not to put my hands in my pants pockets, because pants for this period (turn-of-the-century Russia) have no front pockets. She also pointed out that the men of this period would not cross their legs.

In the run-through, I accidentally skipped the lines in Act I, scene 4 about becoming fat.

David agrees that putting the candle on the sofa in Act II, scene 2 looks strange, but doesn't know if there's anything we can do about it. I tried holding the candle tonight for the whole scene, but it was no good. Tomorrow I'll try handing it to Ferapont to hold.

PERFORMANCE JOURNAL

Wednesday, October 13, 1993 - Preview Performance

Having an audience helped very much. For a small crowd they were pretty responsive. Their reactions helped reassure me that what I am doing can be understood. Deep down, I knew it could, but it's still nice to have the response.

I had a generally good feeling about my performance tonight. My monologue at the end of Act III felt particularly good. I tried some different things, like beginning to leave and then coming back before saying, "Thirdly . . . I have one other thing to tell you . . .". I didn't intend to try it because I didn't think I could justify the move, but when I got to that point in the speech, my body just did it and it felt natural. We'll see tomorrow if David liked it. If he didn't notice it I guess that probably means it's okay.

As of today, I'm still using the baby carriage that everyone hates. The first time I used it David said that from certain parts of the house, you can see that there is no baby in it. But it seems we're using it anyway. There is no way I can totally conceal the carriage's opening from the audience, but I changed some of my staging on my own so as to minimize the possibility of seeing into the carriage from the house.

Becky and Andrea sent Michelle, one of the wardrobe people, to do my hair, so as to make sure that it would be done the way they wanted. They have not let me do my own hair

yet; I don't know what they're afraid of. I told Michelle that I know what styles are appropriate, I know exactly what to do with my hair and that I'd like to do it myself, which is exactly what she was told not to allow. I told her that she can blame it on me if Becky or Andrea yell at her or if they don't like my hair, I just want to do it myself. Michelle completely understood and was very nice about it.

Handing the candle to Ferapont works.

Jen, Rory and I went to the Floridian Diner after the show.

Thursday, October 14, 1993 - Performance #1

I'm starting to develop a routine for the performances. I've been staying in the dressing room as much as I can. I like to sit in there by myself and relax. But you can't relax too much up there. You have to always keep one ear out for your cue, because if you miss it and you're in the dressing room, you have a long run to get to the stage. I pretty much keep to myself until intermission. Then, since I have a long break, I might walk around and talk to people, until about ten minutes into Act III, before going back to the dressing room to get ready for my scene at the end of the act. I stay in the wings for all of Act IV, because of the amount of entrances and exits I have.

There was a nice moment between Rory and me in Act I scene 4, when I delivered the line, ". . . it's as if my body had been let out of a corset." I was talking to Vershinin,

but I spontaneously gave a look to Chebutykin so as to include him. It was nice: I felt the history between Andrei and Chebutykin in this little moment.

Act II scene 2 (between Andrei and Ferapont) was a little off tonight. I don't think I brought out the irony of the situation as well as I usually do.

Keith wants me to hand him the candle and take it back at specific points, so we set them. I give it to him as he is giving me the book and papers, and I take it back after I say, "I'm afraid they'll laugh at me, they'll make me feel ashamed.", which is the end of a beat for me.

The exchange between Andrei and Ferapont at the end of Act III worked beautifully tonight. Sometimes you don't realize that your glossing over a moment until it happens in spite of you; this was one of those times. Andrei says to Ferapont, "To begin with, to you I am not Andrei Sergeevich; I am your honor!", and then realizes what he has said and feels remorseful. I wasn't really seeing Ferapont until tonight; I was doing the moment all by myself. But tonight, I noticed that Keith started giving me something to play off: I saw a person who was hurt and embarrassed by me, and it affected me. The chemistry of the exchange didn't fully hit me until I came off stage and Keith was pretty charged up about how well it went.

John Scheffler painted the carriage and made it look as if a baby were really in it. It looks very nice.

Michelle told me that last night Becky said my hair

looked fantastic, that it was the best that it has ever looked.

Friday, October 15, 1993 - Performance #2

Mark Zeller said in class today that The Three Sisters is his favorite play. He just returned from Houston, where he was playing Tevya in Fiddler on the Roof for the last four weeks, and he came to tonight's show.

He asked us this afternoon how the performances were going. Speaking for myself, I feel good, but the audience reaction is not there very much to reassure me. I can't let it shake my confidence in what I'm doing, otherwise I'll start not to give physical moves their full value, and, since I often draw on what I'm doing physically for the emotional life of the character, my performance will be flat. Mark said that with Chekhov, you can't worry about the audience. That seems like a good general rule to go by with any play. He also said that Chekhov always works better for the actors than the audience anyway.

Mark also commented that Chekhov is so difficult to do because none of the acting is "on the lines," which reminded me of a section of Act IV, scene 2 (between Masha, Andrei and Chebutykin). I have a line to Chebutykin, "If you want my opinion, to participate in a duel or to be present at one, even in the capacity of a doctor, is simply immoral." ¹⁰ This line is from the a different translation (Eugene Bristow's) than the one we're using. Anyway, what's going on underneath

this line to Chebutykin between Andrei and Masha? Well, any suspicions Andrei may have had about her and Vershinin were confirmed at the end of Act III. Considering Andrei's own marital situation, the subject of morality is probably a sore spot between him and Masha. That she is doing virtually the same thing Natasha is doing, while Andrei is trying his best to deny Natasha's behavior, has to have caused bad feelings between Masha and Andrei. Also significant: When Andrei breaks down a short time later in Act IV, scene 5, he says, "My sisters! My darling, my wonderful sisters! Masha . . . my sister!"

Of course, you would probably need a footnote in the program for the audience to pick up on all of this, but it should still be there, it should clarify what is going on on the surface.

Saturday, October 16, 1993 - Performances #3 & #4

I got a late start getting to the theater today, and so I didn't have as much time to prepare, and it actually helped me. It was partially deliberate, because I felt I needed to relax a little bit more, and sometimes too much preparing screws you up more than it prepares you. It's such a waste when actors work so hard on their preparation that it becomes the object of their focus; the performance on stage becomes almost an afterthought. I was concerned that I was starting to fall into this trap, so I decided to experiment a little this afternoon, and my concentration was better.

We did virtually the same show this afternoon and this evening and got two very different responses: generally good today, and generally blah tonight. I felt pretty good about both shows. It proved to me once and for all that I do, in fact, know what I'm doing; some audiences are just going to stay with it more than others.

This afternoon's audience was very responsive, our best audience yet. They even applauded after my Act III monologue. Very nice, even though I got a lot of ribbing backstage about it. But tonight's audience was our worst one yet. Denise told me she counted twenty people that got up and left during my monologue in Act IV. It didn't really distract me, but I couldn't help seeing them. Everywhere I turned, somebody was getting up and walking out. It looked like a fire drill. After we took our curtain call, Rory exclaimed, "Not an open eye in the house!"

When tonight's audience didn't applaud after my Act III monologue as this afternoon's did, I got even more ribbing, mostly from Rory. After the show, I commented to him that I have to be careful that the end of that monologue doesn't get bigger and bigger each time, just because I got applause this afternoon. Without missing a beat, Rory said, "Don't worry, it can't get any bigger than it just got!"

I stopped using the line in Act IV, scene 2 from Eugene Bristow's translation that I had been using, and went back to the one in Jean-Claude van Italic's, the translation we're using: "I think duels are immoral. And I think it's immoral

to help conduct one, even as a doctor." I started using the Bristow line weeks ago, because it begins with "If you want my opinion . . .", and it helped me to better understand Andrei's passivity in the situation: he disapproves, but he's not going to get involved. Now that I understand the sense of the line, I went back to the van Italie version because I think it is more suggestive of other things that might be going on in his mind as well (regarding Masha, for instance).

It was a long day: two performances with a photo shoot in between. We were in costume and makeup for about nine hours straight. Then Rory, Jennifer, Marshall, Denise and I went to Caraville Restaurant.

Rory Schwartz is one of the funniest people I've ever met.

Sunday, October 17, 1993 - Performance #5

It happened again. Spontaneous, ego-boosting applause after my Act III monologue. I have a feeling that it will be a while before I hear the end of the ribbing. All kidding aside, I'm trying to prevent myself from becoming dependent on this kind of response by just keeping in mind that I gave the same quality performance last night . . . and nothing. Otherwise, I'll start to expect it. Getting applause is such a crap-shoot, but if they offer it, I'll take it.

Jonathan, who is playing Rode, has said that the second half of the play is when we all try to out-act each other. Joking like this with him and Rory about the emotional moments

has helped me not to take them so seriously. As a result, I think I'm better at these moments, because now they seem less intimidating.

Wednesday, October 20, 1993; 8:15 PM - 9:45 PM

Our brush-up rehearsal between performance weekends was tonight. It was really just a line-through, and we did it in the theater lobby. Prompted by Rory (who else?), the whole cast applauded after my Act III monologue. I told you I wouldn't hear the end of it. Afterwards, Jennifer and I went with Rory to his apartment. We talked, watched television and looked at his theater memorabilia until about one in the morning.

Thursday, October 21, 1993 - Performance #6

I was a little rusty after the three day lay-off, but not in the way I would've expected. All the mechanical moves were right there; I picked up all my cues. But my thought processes, my beats, were weak. As a result, some of the dynamics felt a bit off: some of my scenes felt low in energy, while others felt over the top. I also felt that Andrei's ironic perspective got away from me tonight. I think that the variance of my performance, though, still occurred within a defined framework.

In general, my performance is pretty consistent; I give roughly the same performance every time. I feel that my worst performance and my best performance are not very far apart on

the spectrum. Tonight was somewhere in the middle. The type of consistency to which I'm referring is the consistency of the performance, not to be confused with consistency of the actor. I think too much consistency in acting can be an obstruction to spontaneity and, as such, a detriment. This seemingly bold statement bears some explanation: in real life, we don't always react the same way to things every single time, so why should we on stage? Sometimes you screen your calls, sometimes you don't; sometimes you get angry when someone on the road cuts you off, sometimes you ignore it. This point is also made in chapter three of the book, Audition, by Michael Shurtleff. The entire chapter is one sentence long: "Consistency is the death of good acting."¹¹ Although I agree with this point, I don't mean to go so far as to say that I believe any character can do anything at any time; the audience still must believe you.

I haven't really spoken to David since last Friday. He was at tonight's performance, but I didn't see him afterwards. I'm going to try to catch him at some point before tomorrow's show. Even though we're into performances, I still find his presence very reassuring, so I like to touch base with him every once in a while.

Friday, October 22, 1993 - Performance #7

Having seen the show last night for the first time since last Friday, David had some notes for us. These were the last notes he plans to give.

David's notes:

Act II, scene 2: When you take back the candle from Ferapont, take a moment to realize that you left him holding it for so long. Don't make a whole play about it, just a moment.

Act III, scene 4: Don't push.

Saturday, October 23, 1993 - Performances #8 & #9

I took a few minutes today just to review some of my choices that maybe I haven't thought much about since I settled on them. For example, in Act I, when does Andrei know that he is going to propose that very day to Natasha? Does he suddenly decide while consoling her, or was it on his day's agenda all along?

I had decided that, although the relationship was headed in that direction, and he was indeed planning to propose in the very near future, maybe even later that day, Andrei's proposal at the end of Act I is something he had not expected to do at that moment. This choice allows the audience to actually see Andrei make the decision to propose right then and there, and it is pretty justifiable: he is planning to propose soon anyway, and decides on the spur of the moment that now is a good time to do it. I just realized today, though, that this choice also shows most clearly how easily Natasha can manipulate Andrei, regardless of whether or not her behavior in Act I is designed for this purpose.

Sunday, October 24, 1993 - Performance #10

Our final performance went well for me personally, and it also seemed to go well overall.

I feel good about my work in the role of Andrei. I'm certain that I would grow even more with it if we were doing an open-ended run. Still, now that our limited run is completed, I feel as if I really accomplished something with the role.

Wednesday, October 27, 1993

I met with the Graduate Committee to hear their evaluation of my performance. The Committee members present were Stephen Langley, Benito Ortolani, Marge Linney, Sam Leiter and David Garfield.

Marge began the critique, saying that she didn't believe that there was really a baby in the carriage, that I didn't make it real, and Benito agreed. I never really felt like I accomplished this, either. I thought there were occasional flashes of a real connection towards the end of the run, but not to a sufficient degree.

My "slight" physical appearance and my age made it a problem for Sam to "buy" me as Andrei. Last week, Mark Zeller told me he would not have cast me in the role, and I got the impression that it was for the same reason. He said that the padding I had was not enough to give the impression that I had let myself go, and that I just look too young. But he realized that I had done what little I could to overcome this

inherent problem.

Sam made a good point when he said that he wanted to see Andrei have a more positive outlook early in the play, specifically in Acts I and II, so that when he crumbles under the strain of his marriage with Natasha, the pressure from his sisters and the burden of his own unfulfilled dreams, we see where he has fallen from. I accepted full responsibility, but David generously added that part of the reason this was lacking may have been directorial, particularly in Act II, scene 1.

Despite their criticisms, which were all constructive, there was a very pleasant, positive atmosphere to the meeting. I got the impression that they were generally pleased with my work. Although I've only documented the criticisms, Marge, David and the others had many positive comments also. At one point, David said to the other professors, "I feel very good about Michael's work," which was especially nice to hear from someone whose opinion I respect, as I do David's. I left the meeting with the satisfying feeling that I had earned (and received) significant respect from my professors for my work.

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A: Program.



Front Cover.

Brooklyn College of The City University of New York Department of Theater		
Faculty	Adjunct and Former Faculty	Guest Artists, Emeriti
Boris Ostrov, Chairman	Boris Ostrov, Emeritus	Glenn Lenny, Emeritus
F. Morris, Chairman	John Lee Barry	Edmund Lutz, Emeritus
Karen Baranov	Thomas Bertram	Marshall Mason
Howard Beckwith	Tom Brennan	Edward Randolph
Thomas A. Bellard	Adrian Byrnes-Hayes	Michael Rovers
Rebecca Cunningham	Irring Brown, Emeritus	Toby Robinson
David Gerfield	Michael Bush	Gordon Russell, Emeritus
Richard Kiersey	Anthony Calabro	Trisha Sandberg
Stephen Langley	Patricia Campbell	Douglas Schmidt
Samuel L. Lott	Kay Carney	Beverly Smith-Crowson
Margaret Loney	Peter Carney	Howard M. Squibbs
John Schell	Edith Elder, Emeritus	Taliesin
Michael Turpin	James Ellis	Selma Tashman
	George Ferenc	Harry H. Wainwright
	Robert Fyfe	Robert Wainwright
	Todd Hansen	Laural Ann Wilson
	Joan Harris	Andrew Work
	Karen Hopkins	Paul Zukerberg
	James Katschinski	Mark Zeller
	J. Scott Kennedy	
	Thomas Kuo	
	Daniel Kuo	
	Yoshiko L. Kuroki	

Undergraduate Division
The THEATER DEPARTMENT of Brooklyn College with its faculty of scholars and working professionals offers B.A. and B.F.A. degrees in theater (128 credits). All classes meet during the day and each student is treated as an individual based on his or her background, abilities and specific goals.

Graduate Division
The THEATER DEPARTMENT of Brooklyn College offers graduate degrees in five areas of specialization: M.A. degree in THEATER HISTORY and CRITICISM and M.F.A. degrees (45 credits) in ACTING, DIRECTING, THEATER DESIGN and PERFORMING ARTS MANAGEMENT.

For further information write:
Chairperson, Department of Theater
Brooklyn College
Brooklyn, NY 11210

Back Cover.

Brooklyn College of the City University of New York Department of Theater presents <i>The Three Sisters</i> by Anton Chekhov translated by Jean-Claude van Itallie directed by David Gerfield	
Set Designer John C. Schettler	Lighting Designer Michael S. Appel
Costume Designer Andrea Roberts	Production Stage Manager Suzanne M. White
Cast	
Olga	Maryanne Arena
Masha	Jennifer Beggs
Irina	Dennis Greber
Tuzenbach, Nicolas Lvovich	Dennis J. Gervley
Chebutykin, Ivan Romanovich	R. L. Swartz
Solyony, Vasily Vasilovich	Dan Hall
Andriy	Terry Ann Spruner
Ferapont	Kerth Trinius
Verkhovnia, Alexander Ignatievich	Gary Morabito
Prozorov, Andrei Sergeevich	Michael Cezanne
Kalyagin, Pyodor Ilyich	Walter G. Harman, Jr.
Natasha Ivanovna (Natasha)	Tina Genger-Corroy
Fedotkin, Alexei Petrovich	Jonathan Lopez
Rode, Vladimir Karlovich	Marshall B. Johnson
Soldier	William Hernandez
Maid	Nancy Kelly
The setting is the Prozorov House, over a period of several years in the turn of the century. There will be one 15-minute intermission.	
Jean-Claude van Itallie's translation, <i>Three Sisters</i> , is produced by special arrangement with Dramatists Play Service Inc.	
By order of the Fire Department, smoking in these premises is strictly prohibited. The taking of photographs and the use of recording equipment are not permitted in this theater.	
<p>Coming Next!</p> <p>The Water Engine New Workshop Theater, Oct. 28-31 What the Butler Saw Gershwin Theater, Dec. 2-12 Earth Sports New Workshop Theater, Dec. 3-12</p>	
Production Staff	
Assistant Stage Manager	Arthur (Yung-Yo) Guo
Property Supervisor	Kerth Trinius
Assistant Costume Designers	Paula Inocent, Melanie Schmidt
Make-up Design	Felicia Lipchik
Technical Director/Sound Consultant	Michael Harrison
Technical Supervisor	Harry Miller
Assistant Technical Supervisor	Venustiano Borromeo
Production Supervisor	Michael Turpin
Lightboard Operator	Paul Jones
Sound Operator	Suzanne Sorrentino
Wardrobe Supervisor	Michelle Hall
Running Crew Supervisor	Kate Ambrosini
Crew Coordinator/Marketing Director	Jedd Silverman
Facility Lighting Advisor	Howard Beckwith
Facility Costume Advisor	Rebecca Cunningham
Costume Shop Supervisor	Edmond Felix
House Manager	Jonathan Holley
Assistant House Manager	Kyryon White
Scheduling Traffic	Ronald Innoce
Subscription Manager	Joyce Dimer
Graphic Designer	Just Your Type
Graduate Interns	Dave DuWell, Paula Inocent, Gary Morabito, Jong Han Pyo, Frank Ruzano, Vincent Sagona, Melanie Schmidt, Kumiko Uetake
Wardrobe Running Crew	
Nicole Andrews, Valencia Edwards, Dany Santiago	
Set Construction/Painting	
Nicoletta Arlia, Hassan Beyah, Lionel Campbell, Olivia Corlett, Sheila DeJesus, Kevin Dwane, Brian DiFusco, James Gilmaron, Ian Gordon, Zion Halali, Michelle Hall, Nancy Kelly, Israel Merer, Jade Lau, Michael LoPorto, Christine Maggiore, Virginia Olson, Theresa Tarano	
Costume Construction	
Tasha Davis, Sheila DeJesus, Felicia Fishburn, Jennifer Hernandez, Lisa Koven, Jeanette Kruis, Cecile Marchal, Aisha Potts, Thurston Reyes, Donna Waters	
Props	
Amelia Fowler, Dana Stancampiano	
Electric	
Andrew Allen, Nicoletta Arlia, Miah Ann, Calvert Bowen, Kevin Dwane, Jeanette Figueroa, Amelia Fowler, William Hernandez, Paul Jones, Nancy Kelly, Adam Korn, Phyllis Ramondio, Wesley Reilly, Susan M. White	
Production Running Crew	
Amelia Fowler, Nancy Kelly, Dana Stancampiano, Kathleen Kearney	

Inside.

A Mainstage Production presented by Brooklyn College Department of Theater

The Three Sisters


by Anton Chekhov

directed by David Garfield

Oct. 14-24, 1993

George Gershwin Theater

Evenings at 8 pm, Matinees at 2 pm



Tickets \$7
(Sat. evenings & Sun. matinees)
and \$6
(Thurs. & Fri. evenings, Sat. matinees)

For ticket information, call:
(718) 951-4500

APPENDIX C: Production photographs.



Act II, scene 1. Natasha and Andrei.

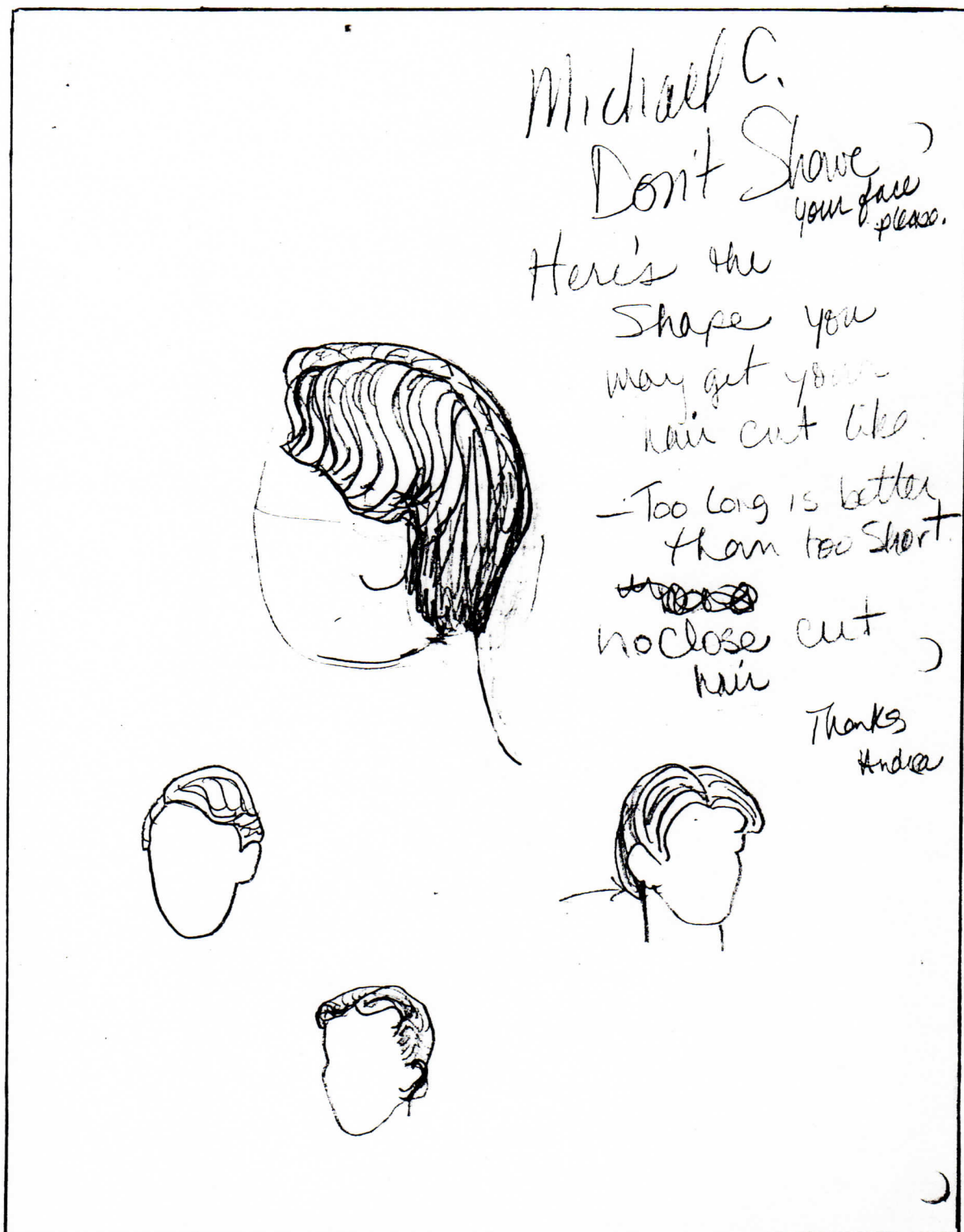


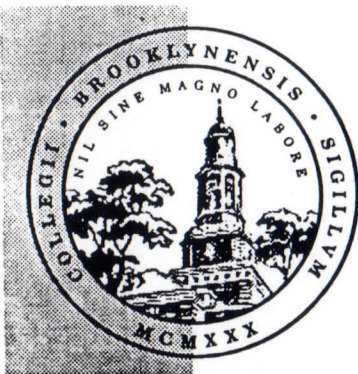
Act III, scene 4. Andrei.



Act IV, scene 5. Andrei and Ferapont.

APPENDIX D: Hairstyle Sketches from the Costume Designer.





BROOKLYN COLLEGE EXCELSIOR

BROOKLYN COLLEGE'S OFFICIAL STUDENT NEWSPAPER

Volume Eleven, Number Eight • Monday, October 25, 1993

Three Sisters Not Worth the Three Hours

BY ANNE LOUISE
KENNEDY

Long winters, grey days, and dreams of Moscow: all portraits of Russian life according to Chekov in his play, *The Three Sisters*.

He gives us Olga, the eldest and wisest, played by Maryanne Arena, Masha, somewhat cynical, played by Jennifer Beggs, and the ever-pure Irina, played by Denise Greber.

Into their lives float men of the military, whose presence brings stories of travel and good cheer. It is Alexander Ignatevich (played brilliantly by Gary Morabito) who ignites old passions in the sisters to return to Moscow—the place of supposed happiness—in contrast to the small and shabby town in which

they reside. It is also Alexander who rekindles feelings of love in Masha, whose marriage to a strait-laced professor has grown all but stale.

As the play continues, so do the years, and we soon find ourselves looking at different characters. Through the spectacle of time, however, we see the process of change. Parenting seems to have affected Natasha and Andrusha's (The sisters' parents) marriage: he muddles through most of the second act hovering over a baby carriage. She is still as overbearing and bossy as always, but he has shriveled into something of a cartoon. Olga becomes head mistress, a position she accepts but did not want, in a school she wishes she could leave. Irina's vision of keeping her spirits

high by working slowly drains her, much in the same way not being in Moscow does. Masha is the only one who seems to improve, but the day arrives when the soldiers must leave. Ignatevich leaves her behind, to her great despair. We are left with the three sisters with only each other to lean on, just as we began.

It seemed to me that this is all was needed, but that would have given us no story! Try as they might, there was very little to be done with such a bleak and dismal story. Russian life at the turn of the century is not for the happy bunch, I can assure you. This was bland down to the details: grey set, drab furniture, dingy costumes. The only person given any chance of vibrance is Irina, and we see her

spirit sadly crushed under the circumstances her life gives her. As for the aspect of love, it seemed to me our darling Masha overacted; I have not seen such pitiful facial expressions since the last time I watched *Anna Karenina*. The music meant to inspire optimism and hope as the soldiers

leave was also laughable—as if after so much sadness and monotony we're supposed to sit up and cheer? From the moment one sets foot in the theater, it was blatantly obvious that all these siblings had was each other. It's a shame that it took almost three hours to make this point.

APPENDIX F: Scene Breakdown, Rehearsal Schedule, and Contact Sheet.

THE THREE SISTERS: Scene Breakdown

- I, i (p. 5)
Olga, Masha, Irina, Chebutykin, Tuzenbach, Solyony
(Maid, Anfisa, Soldier: setting table)
- I, ii (p. 9: Anfisa & Ferapont enter)
Anfisa, Ferapont, Olga, Masha, Irina,
Chebutykin, Tuzenbach, Solyony, Soldier
- I, iii (p. 10: Vershinin enters)
Vershinin, Olga, Masha, Irina, Chebutykin, Tuzenbach, Solyony
- I, iv (p. 13: Andrei enters)
Andrei, Vershinin, Olga, Masha, Irina, Chebutykin, Tuzenbach, Solyony
- I, v (p. 15: Kulygin enters)
Kulygin, Andrei, Vershinin, Olga, Masha, Irina, Chebutykin, Tuzenbach,
Solyony (Anfisa, at dinner table)
- I, vi (p. 18: Natasha enters)
Natasha, Rode, Fedotik, Vershinin, Olga, Masha, Irina, Andrei,
Chebutykin, Tuzenbach, Solyony, Kulygin, Anfisa
- II, i (p. 21)
Natasha, Andrei
- II, ii (p. 22: Ferapont enters)
Andrei, Ferapont
- II, iii (p. 23: Masha & Vershinin enter)
Masha, Vershinin, (Maid, lighting lamp & candles)
- II, iv (p. 25: Irina & Tuzenbach enter)
Tuzenbach, Irina, Masha, Vershinin, Chebutykin, Fedotik, Rode
- II, v (p. 28: Anfisa, Natasha, Solyony enter)
Anfisa, Natasha, Solyony, Tuzenbach, Irina, Masha, Vershinin,
Andrei, Chebutykin, Fedotik, Rode
- II, vi (p. 32: Andrei & Chebutykin re-enter)
Andrei, Chebutykin, Irina, Anfisa, Solyony, Natasha, Maid,
Olga, Vershinin, Kulygin
- III, i (p. 36)
Anfisa, Olga, Ferapont, Natasha, (Masha, lying on a couch)
- III, ii (p. p. 38: Kulygin enters)
Kulygin, Olga, Chebutykin, Irina, Vershinin, Tuzenbach,
Fedotik, Solyony
- III, iii (p. 43: Kulygin exits)
Irina, Masha, Olga, (Natasha, crosses the stage holding a candle)
- III, iv (p. 45: Andrei & Ferapont enter)
Andrei, Ferapont, Olga, Irina, Masha, Kulygin
- IV, i (p. 48)
Tuzenbach, Irina, Fedotik, Kulygin, Rode, Chebutykin.
(Natasha, 1 line; Andrei, pushing a baby carriage up stage)
- IV, ii (p. 51: Kulygin & Irina exit)
Chebutykin, Masha, Andrei
- IV, iii (p. 53: Solyony enters)
Solyoni, Ferpont, Chebutykin, Andrei
- IV, iv (p. 54: Irina & Tuzenbach enter)
Irina, Tuzenbach, (Kulygin, crossing upstage, calling to Masha)
- IV, v (p. 55: Andrei & Ferapont enter)
Ferapont, Andrei, Natasha, Olga, Anfisa, Vershinin, Masha, Kulygin
- IV, vi (p. 58: Masha enters)
Masha, Vershinin, Olga, Kulygin, Irina, Natasha, Chebutykin, Maid

Scene Breakdown.

THE THREE SISTERS

Intensive Schedule: Wednesday, Sep. 8 to Wednesday, Sep. 15

Wednesday, Sep. 8	Thursday, Sep. 9	Friday, Sep. 10	Saturday, Sep. 11	Sunday, Sep. 12	Monday, Sep. 13	Tuesday, Sep. 14	Wednesday, Sep. 15	Thursday, Sep. 16	Friday, Sep. 17	Saturday, Sep. 18	Sunday, Sep. 19	Monday, Sep. 20	Tuesday, Sep. 21	Wednesday, Sep. 22	Thursday, Sep. 23	Friday, Sep. 24	Saturday, Sep. 25	Sunday, Sep. 26	Monday, Sep. 27	Tuesday, Sep. 28	Wednesday, Sep. 29	Thursday, Sep. 30	Friday, Oct. 1	Saturday, Oct. 2	Sunday, Oct. 3	Monday, Oct. 4	Tuesday, Oct. 5	Wednesday, Oct. 6	Thursday, Oct. 7	Friday, Oct. 8	Saturday, Oct. 9	Sunday, Oct. 10	Monday, Oct. 11	Tuesday, Oct. 12	Wednesday, Oct. 13	Thursday, Oct. 14	Friday, Oct. 15	Saturday, Oct. 16	Sunday, Oct. 17	Monday, Oct. 18	Tuesday, Oct. 19	Wednesday, Oct. 20	Thursday, Oct. 21	Friday, Oct. 22	Saturday, Oct. 23	Sunday, Oct. 24	Monday, Oct. 25	Tuesday, Oct. 26	Wednesday, Oct. 27	Thursday, Oct. 28	Friday, Oct. 29	Saturday, Oct. 30	Sunday, Oct. 31	Monday, Nov. 1	Tuesday, Nov. 2	Wednesday, Nov. 3	Thursday, Nov. 4	Friday, Nov. 5	Saturday, Nov. 6	Sunday, Nov. 7	Monday, Nov. 8	Tuesday, Nov. 9	Wednesday, Nov. 10	Thursday, Nov. 11	Friday, Nov. 12	Saturday, Nov. 13	Sunday, Nov. 14	Monday, Nov. 15	Tuesday, Nov. 16	Wednesday, Nov. 17	Thursday, Nov. 18	Friday, Nov. 19	Saturday, Nov. 20	Sunday, Nov. 21	Monday, Nov. 22	Tuesday, Nov. 23	Wednesday, Nov. 24	Thursday, Nov. 25	Friday, Nov. 26	Saturday, Nov. 27	Sunday, Nov. 28	Monday, Nov. 29	Tuesday, Nov. 30	Wednesday, Dec. 1	Thursday, Dec. 2	Friday, Dec. 3	Saturday, Dec. 4	Sunday, Dec. 5	Monday, Dec. 6	Tuesday, Dec. 7	Wednesday, Dec. 8	Thursday, Dec. 9	Friday, Dec. 10	Saturday, Dec. 11	Sunday, Dec. 12	Monday, Dec. 13	Tuesday, Dec. 14	Wednesday, Dec. 15	Thursday, Dec. 16	Friday, Dec. 17	Saturday, Dec. 18	Sunday, Dec. 19	Monday, Dec. 20	Tuesday, Dec. 21	Wednesday, Dec. 22	Thursday, Dec. 23	Friday, Dec. 24	Saturday, Dec. 25	Sunday, Dec. 26	Monday, Dec. 27	Tuesday, Dec. 28	Wednesday, Dec. 29	Thursday, Dec. 30	Friday, Dec. 31	Saturday, Jan. 1	Sunday, Jan. 2	Monday, Jan. 3	Tuesday, Jan. 4	Wednesday, Jan. 5	Thursday, Jan. 6	Friday, Jan. 7	Saturday, Jan. 8	Sunday, Jan. 9	Monday, Jan. 10	Tuesday, Jan. 11	Wednesday, Jan. 12	Thursday, Jan. 13	Friday, Jan. 14	Saturday, Jan. 15	Sunday, Jan. 16	Monday, Jan. 17	Tuesday, Jan. 18	Wednesday, Jan. 19	Thursday, Jan. 20	Friday, Jan. 21	Saturday, Jan. 22	Sunday, Jan. 23	Monday, Jan. 24	Tuesday, Jan. 25	Wednesday, Jan. 26	Thursday, Jan. 27	Friday, Jan. 28	Saturday, Jan. 29	Sunday, Jan. 30	Monday, Jan. 31	Tuesday, Feb. 1	Wednesday, Feb. 2	Thursday, Feb. 3	Friday, Feb. 4	Saturday, Feb. 5	Sunday, Feb. 6	Monday, Feb. 7	Tuesday, Feb. 8	Wednesday, Feb. 9	Thursday, Feb. 10	Friday, Feb. 11	Saturday, Feb. 12	Sunday, Feb. 13	Monday, Feb. 14	Tuesday, Feb. 15	Wednesday, Feb. 16	Thursday, Feb. 17	Friday, Feb. 18	Saturday, Feb. 19	Sunday, Feb. 20	Monday, Feb. 21	Tuesday, Feb. 22	Wednesday, Feb. 23	Thursday, Feb. 24	Friday, Feb. 25	Saturday, Feb. 26	Sunday, Feb. 27	Monday, Feb. 28	Tuesday, Feb. 29	Wednesday, Feb. 30	Thursday, Mar. 1	Friday, Mar. 2	Saturday, Mar. 3	Sunday, Mar. 4	Monday, Mar. 5	Tuesday, Mar. 6	Wednesday, Mar. 7	Thursday, Mar. 8	Friday, Mar. 9	Saturday, Mar. 10	Sunday, Mar. 11	Monday, Mar. 12	Tuesday, Mar. 13	Wednesday, Mar. 14	Thursday, Mar. 15	Friday, Mar. 16	Saturday, Mar. 17	Sunday, Mar. 18	Monday, Mar. 19	Tuesday, Mar. 20	Wednesday, Mar. 21	Thursday, Mar. 22	Friday, Mar. 23	Saturday, Mar. 24	Sunday, Mar. 25	Monday, Mar. 26	Tuesday, Mar. 27	Wednesday, Mar. 28	Thursday, Mar. 29	Friday, Mar. 30	Saturday, Mar. 31	Sunday, Apr. 1	Monday, Apr. 2	Tuesday, Apr. 3	Wednesday, Apr. 4	Thursday, Apr. 5	Friday, Apr. 6	Saturday, Apr. 7	Sunday, Apr. 8	Monday, Apr. 9	Tuesday, Apr. 10	Wednesday, Apr. 11	Thursday, Apr. 12	Friday, Apr. 13	Saturday, Apr. 14	Sunday, Apr. 15	Monday, Apr. 16	Tuesday, Apr. 17	Wednesday, Apr. 18	Thursday, Apr. 19	Friday, Apr. 20	Saturday, Apr. 21	Sunday, Apr. 22	Monday, Apr. 23	Tuesday, Apr. 24	Wednesday, Apr. 25	Thursday, Apr. 26	Friday, Apr. 27	Saturday, Apr. 28	Sunday, Apr. 29	Monday, Apr. 30	Tuesday, May 1	Wednesday, May 2	Thursday, May 3	Friday, May 4	Saturday, May 5	Sunday, May 6	Monday, May 7	Tuesday, May 8	Wednesday, May 9	Thursday, May 10	Friday, May 11	Saturday, May 12	Sunday, May 13	Monday, May 14	Tuesday, May 15	Wednesday, May 16	Thursday, May 17	Friday, May 18	Saturday, May 19	Sunday, May 20	Monday, May 21	Tuesday, May 22	Wednesday, May 23	Thursday, May 24	Friday, May 25	Saturday, May 26	Sunday, May 27	Monday, May 28	Tuesday, May 29	Wednesday, May 30	Thursday, May 31	Friday, Jun 1	Saturday, Jun 2	Sunday, Jun 3	Monday, Jun 4	Tuesday, Jun 5	Wednesday, Jun 6	Thursday, Jun 7	Friday, Jun 8	Saturday, Jun 9	Sunday, Jun 10	Monday, Jun 11	Tuesday, Jun 12	Wednesday, Jun 13	Thursday, Jun 14	Friday, Jun 15	Saturday, Jun 16	Sunday, Jun 17	Monday, Jun 18	Tuesday, Jun 19	Wednesday, Jun 20	Thursday, Jun 21	Friday, Jun 22	Saturday, Jun 23	Sunday, Jun 24	Monday, Jun 25	Tuesday, Jun 26	Wednesday, Jun 27	Thursday, Jun 28	Friday, Jun 29	Saturday, Jun 30	Sunday, Jul 1	Monday, Jul 2	Tuesday, Jul 3	Wednesday, Jul 4	Thursday, Jul 5	Friday, Jul 6	Saturday, Jul 7	Sunday, Jul 8	Monday, Jul 9	Tuesday, Jul 10	Wednesday, Jul 11	Thursday, Jul 12	Friday, Jul 13	Saturday, Jul 14	Sunday, Jul 15	Monday, Jul 16	Tuesday, Jul 17	Wednesday, Jul 18	Thursday, Jul 19	Friday, Jul 20	Saturday, Jul 21	Sunday, Jul 22	Monday, Jul 23	Tuesday, Jul 24	Wednesday, Jul 25	Thursday, Jul 26	Friday, Jul 27	Saturday, Jul 28	Sunday, Jul 29	Monday, Jul 30	Tuesday, Jul 31	Wednesday, Aug 1	Thursday, Aug 2	Friday, Aug 3	Saturday, Aug 4	Sunday, Aug 5	Monday, Aug 6	Tuesday, Aug 7	Wednesday, Aug 8	Thursday, Aug 9	Friday, Aug 10	Saturday, Aug 11	Sunday, Aug 12	Monday, Aug 13	Tuesday, Aug 14	Wednesday, Aug 15	Thursday, Aug 16	Friday, Aug 17	Saturday, Aug 18	Sunday, Aug 19	Monday, Aug 20	Tuesday, Aug 21	Wednesday, Aug 22	Thursday, Aug 23	Friday, Aug 24	Saturday, Aug 25	Sunday, Aug 26	Monday, Aug 27	Tuesday, Aug 28	Wednesday, Aug 29	Thursday, Aug 30	Friday, Aug 31	Saturday, Sep 1	Sunday, Sep 2	Monday, Sep 3	Tuesday, Sep 4	Wednesday, Sep 5	Thursday, Sep 6	Friday, Sep 7	Saturday, Sep 8	Sunday, Sep 9	Monday, Sep 10	Tuesday, Sep 11	Wednesday, Sep 12	Thursday, Sep 13	Friday, Sep 14	Saturday, Sep 15	Sunday, Sep 16	Monday, Sep 17	Tuesday, Sep 18	Wednesday, Sep 19	Thursday, Sep 20	Friday, Sep 21	Saturday, Sep 22	Sunday, Sep 23	Monday, Sep 24	Tuesday, Sep 25	Wednesday, Sep 26	Thursday, Sep 27	Friday, Sep 28	Saturday, Sep 29	Sunday, Sep 30	Monday, Oct 1	Tuesday, Oct 2	Wednesday, Oct 3	Thursday, Oct 4	Friday, Oct 5	Saturday, Oct 6	Sunday, Oct 7	Monday, Oct 8	Tuesday, Oct 9	Wednesday, Oct 10	Thursday, Oct 11	Friday, Oct 12	Saturday, Oct 13	Sunday, Oct 14	Monday, Oct 15	Tuesday, Oct 16	Wednesday, Oct 17	Thursday, Oct 18	Friday, Oct 19	Saturday, Oct 20	Sunday, Oct 21	Monday, Oct 22	Tuesday, Oct 23	Wednesday, Oct 24	Thursday, Oct 25	Friday, Oct 26	Saturday, Oct 27	Sunday, Oct 28	Monday, Oct 29	Tuesday, Oct 30	Wednesday, Oct 31	Thursday, Nov 1	Friday, Nov 2	Saturday, Nov 3	Sunday, Nov 4	Monday, Nov 5	Tuesday, Nov 6	Wednesday, Nov 7	Thursday, Nov 8	Friday, Nov 9	Saturday, Nov 10	Sunday, Nov 11	Monday, Nov 12	Tuesday, Nov 13	Wednesday, Nov 14	Thursday, Nov 15	Friday, Nov 16	Saturday, Nov 17	Sunday, Nov 18	Monday, Nov 19	Tuesday, Nov 20	Wednesday, Nov 21	Thursday, Nov 22	Friday, Nov 23	Saturday, Nov 24	Sunday, Nov 25	Monday, Nov 26	Tuesday, Nov 27	Wednesday, Nov 28	Thursday, Nov 29	Friday, Nov 30	Saturday, Dec 1	Sunday, Dec 2	Monday, Dec 3	Tuesday, Dec 4	Wednesday, Dec 5	Thursday, Dec 6	Friday, Dec 7	Saturday, Dec 8	Sunday, Dec 9	Monday, Dec 10	Tuesday, Dec 11	Wednesday, Dec 12	Thursday, Dec 13	Friday, Dec 14	Saturday, Dec 15	Sunday, Dec 16	Monday, Dec 17	Tuesday, Dec 18	Wednesday, Dec 19	Thursday, Dec 20	Friday, Dec 21	Saturday, Dec 22	Sunday, Dec 23	Monday, Dec 24	Tuesday, Dec 25	Wednesday, Dec 26	Thursday, Dec 27	Friday, Dec 28	Saturday, Dec 29	Sunday, Dec 30	Monday, Dec 31	Tuesday, Jan 1	Wednesday, Jan 2	Thursday, Jan 3	Friday, Jan 4	Saturday, Jan 5	Sunday, Jan 6	Monday, Jan 7	Tuesday, Jan 8	Wednesday, Jan 9	Thursday, Jan 10	Friday, Jan 11	Saturday, Jan 12	Sunday, Jan 13	Monday, Jan 14	Tuesday, Jan 15	Wednesday, Jan 16	Thursday, Jan 17	Friday, Jan 18	Saturday, Jan 19	Sunday, Jan 20	Monday, Jan 21	Tuesday, Jan 22	Wednesday, Jan 23	Thursday, Jan 24	Friday, Jan 25	Saturday, Jan 26	Sunday, Jan 27	Monday, Jan 28	Tuesday, Jan 29	Wednesday, Jan 30	Thursday, Jan 31	Friday, Feb 1	Saturday, Feb 2	Sunday, Feb 3	Monday, Feb 4	Tuesday, Feb 5	Wednesday, Feb 6	Thursday, Feb 7	Friday, Feb 8	Saturday, Feb 9	Sunday, Feb 10	Monday, Feb 11	Tuesday, Feb 12	Wednesday, Feb 13	Thursday, Feb 14	Friday, Feb 15	Saturday, Feb 16	Sunday, Feb 17	Monday, Feb 18	Tuesday, Feb 19	Wednesday, Feb 20	Thursday, Feb 21	Friday, Feb 22	Saturday, Feb 23	Sunday, Feb 24	Monday, Feb 25	Tuesday, Feb 26	Wednesday, Feb 27	Thursday, Feb 28	Friday, Feb 29	Saturday, Mar 1	Sunday, Mar 2	Monday, Mar 3	Tuesday, Mar 4	Wednesday, Mar 5	Thursday, Mar 6	Friday, Mar 7	Saturday, Mar 8	Sunday, Mar 9	Monday, Mar 10	Tuesday, Mar 11	Wednesday, Mar 12	Thursday, Mar 13	Friday, Mar 14	Saturday, Mar 15	Sunday, Mar 16	Monday, Mar 17	Tuesday, Mar 18	Wednesday, Mar 19	Thursday, Mar 20	Friday, Mar 21	Saturday, Mar 22	Sunday, Mar 23	Monday, Mar 24	Tuesday, Mar 25	Wednesday, Mar 26	Thursday, Mar 27	Friday, Mar 28	Saturday, Mar 29	Sunday, Mar 30	Monday, Mar 31	Tuesday, Apr 1	Wednesday, Apr 2	Thursday, Apr 3	Friday, Apr 4	Saturday, Apr 5	Sunday, Apr 6	Monday, Apr 7	Tuesday, Apr 8	Wednesday, Apr 9	Thursday, Apr 10	Friday, Apr 11	Saturday, Apr 12	Sunday, Apr 13	Monday, Apr 14	Tuesday, Apr 15	Wednesday, Apr 16	Thursday, Apr 17	Friday, Apr 18	Saturday, Apr 19	Sunday, Apr 20	Monday, Apr 21	Tuesday, Apr 22	Wednesday, Apr 23	Thursday, Apr 24	Friday, Apr 25	Saturday, Apr 26	Sunday, Apr 27	Monday, Apr 28	Tuesday, Apr 29	Wednesday, Apr 30	Thursday, May 1	Friday, May 2	Saturday, May 3	Sunday, May 4	Monday, May 5	Tuesday, May 6	Wednesday, May 7	Thursday, May 8	Friday, May 9	Saturday, May 10	Sunday, May 11	Monday, May 12	Tuesday, May 13	Wednesday, May 14	Thursday, May 15	Friday, May 16	Saturday, May 17	Sunday, May 18	Monday, May 19	Tuesday, May 20	Wednesday, May 21	Thursday, May 22	Friday, May 23	Saturday, May 24	Sunday, May 25	Monday, May 26	Tuesday, May 27	Wednesday, May 28	Thursday, May 29	Friday, May 30	Saturday, May 31	Sunday, Jun 1	Monday, Jun 2	Tuesday, Jun 3	Wednesday, Jun 4	Thursday, Jun 5	Friday, Jun 6	Saturday, Jun 7	Sunday, Jun 8	Monday, Jun 9	Tuesday, Jun 10	Wednesday, Jun 11	Thursday, Jun 12	Friday, Jun 13	Saturday, Jun 14	Sunday, Jun 15	Monday, Jun 16	Tuesday, Jun 17	Wednesday, Jun 18	Thursday, Jun 19	Friday, Jun 20	Saturday, Jun 21	Sunday, Jun 22	Monday, Jun 23	Tuesday, Jun 24	Wednesday, Jun 25	Thursday, Jun 26	Friday, Jun 27	Saturday, Jun 28	Sunday, Jun 29	Monday, Jun 30	Tuesday, Jul 1	Wednesday, Jul 2	Thursday, Jul 3	Friday, Jul 4	Saturday, Jul 5	Sunday, Jul 6	Monday, Jul 7	Tuesday, Jul 8	Wednesday, Jul 9	Thursday, Jul 10	Friday, Jul 11	Saturday, Jul 12	Sunday, Jul 13	Monday, Jul 14	Tuesday, Jul 15	Wednesday, Jul 16	Thursday, Jul 17	Friday, Jul 18	Saturday, Jul 19	Sunday, Jul 20	Monday, Jul 21	Tuesday, Jul 22	Wednesday, Jul 23	Thursday, Jul 24	Friday, Jul 25	Saturday, Jul 26	Sunday, Jul 27	Monday, Jul 28	Tuesday, Jul 29	Wednesday, Jul 30	Thursday, Jul 31	Friday, Aug 1	Saturday, Aug 2	Sunday, Aug 3	Monday, Aug 4	Tuesday, Aug 5	Wednesday, Aug 6	Thursday, Aug 7	Friday, Aug 8	Saturday, Aug 9	Sunday, Aug 10	Monday, Aug 11	Tuesday, Aug 12	Wednesday, Aug 13	Thursday, Aug 14	Friday, Aug 15	Saturday, Aug 16	Sunday, Aug 17	Monday, Aug 18	Tuesday, Aug 19	Wednesday, Aug 20	Thursday, Aug 21	Friday, Aug 22	Saturday, Aug 23	Sunday, Aug 24	Monday, Aug 25	Tuesday, Aug 26	Wednesday, Aug 27	Thursday, Aug 28	Friday, Aug 29	Saturday, Aug 30	Sunday, Aug 31	Monday, Sep 1	Tuesday, Sep 2	Wednesday, Sep 3	Thursday, Sep 4	Friday, Sep 5	Saturday, Sep 6	Sunday, Sep 7	Monday, Sep 8	Tuesday, Sep 9	Wednesday, Sep 10	Thursday, Sep 11	Friday, Sep 12	Saturday, Sep 13	Sunday, Sep 14	Monday, Sep 15	Tuesday, Sep 16	Wednesday, Sep 17	Thursday, Sep 18	Friday, Sep 19	Saturday, Sep 20	Sunday, Sep 21	Monday, Sep 22	Tuesday, Sep 23	Wednesday, Sep 24	Thursday, Sep 25	Friday, Sep 26	Saturday, Sep 27	Sunday, Sep 28	Monday, Sep 29	Tuesday, Sep 30	Wednesday, Oct 1	Thursday, Oct 2	Friday, Oct 3	Saturday, Oct 4	Sunday, Oct 5	Monday, Oct 6	Tuesday, Oct 7	Wednesday, Oct 8	Thursday, Oct 9	Friday, Oct 10	Saturday, Oct 11	Sunday, Oct 12	Monday, Oct 13	Tuesday, Oct 14	Wednesday, Oct 15	Thursday, Oct 16	Friday, Oct 17	Saturday, Oct 18	Sunday, Oct 19	Monday, Oct 20	Tuesday, Oct 21	Wednesday, Oct 22	Thursday, Oct 23	Friday, Oct 24	Saturday, Oct 25	Sunday, Oct 26	Monday, Oct 27	Tuesday, Oct 28	Wednesday, Oct 29	Thursday, Oct 30	Friday, Oct 31	Saturday, Nov 1	Sunday, Nov 2	Monday, Nov 3	Tuesday, Nov 4	Wednesday, Nov 5	Thursday, Nov 6	Friday, Nov 7	Saturday, Nov 8	Sunday, Nov 9	Monday, Nov 10	Tuesday, Nov 11	Wednesday, Nov 12	Thursday, Nov 13	Friday, Nov 14	Saturday, Nov 15	Sunday, Nov 16	Monday, Nov 17	Tuesday, Nov 18	Wednesday, Nov 19	Thursday, Nov 20	Friday, Nov 21	Saturday, Nov 22	Sunday, Nov 23	Monday, Nov 24	Tuesday, Nov 25	Wednesday, Nov 26	Thursday, Nov 27	Friday, Nov 28	Saturday, Nov 29	Sunday, Nov 30	Monday, Dec 1	Tuesday, Dec 2	Wednesday, Dec 3	Thursday, Dec 4	Friday, Dec 5	Saturday, Dec 6	Sunday, Dec 7	Monday, Dec 8	Tuesday, Dec 9	Wednesday, Dec 10	Thursday, Dec 11	Friday, Dec 12	Saturday, Dec 13	Sunday, Dec 14	Monday, Dec 15	Tuesday, Dec 16	Wednesday, Dec 17	Thursday, Dec 18	Friday, Dec 19	Saturday, Dec 20	Sunday, Dec 21	Monday, Dec 22	Tuesday, Dec 23	Wednesday, Dec 24	Thursday, Dec 25	Friday, Dec 26	Saturday, Dec 27	Sunday, Dec 28	Monday, Dec 29	Tuesday, Dec 30	Wednesday, Dec 31	Thursday, Jan 1	Friday, Jan 2	Saturday, Jan 3	Sunday, Jan 4	Monday, Jan 5	Tuesday, Jan 6	Wednesday, Jan 7	Thursday, Jan 8	Friday, Jan 9	Saturday, Jan 10	Sunday, Jan 11	Monday, Jan 12	Tuesday, Jan 13	Wednesday, Jan 14	Thursday, Jan 15	Friday, Jan 16	Saturday, Jan 17	Sunday, Jan 18	Monday, Jan 19	Tuesday, Jan 20	Wednesday, Jan 21	Thursday, Jan 22	Friday, Jan 23	Saturday, Jan 24	Sunday, Jan 25	Monday, Jan 26	Tuesday, Jan 27	Wednesday, Jan 28	Thursday, Jan 29	Friday, Jan 30	Saturday, Jan 31	Sunday, Feb 1	Monday, Feb 2	Tuesday, Feb 3	Wednesday, Feb 4	Thursday, Feb 5	Friday, Feb 6	Saturday, Feb 7	Sunday, Feb 8	Monday, Feb 9	Tuesday, Feb 10	Wednesday, Feb 11	Thursday, Feb 12	Friday, Feb 13	Saturday, Feb 14	Sunday, Feb 15	Monday, Feb 16	Tuesday, Feb 17	Wednesday, Feb 18	Thursday, Feb 19	Friday, Feb 20	Saturday, Feb 21	Sunday, Feb 22	Monday, Feb 23	Tuesday, Feb 24	Wednesday, Feb 25	Thursday, Feb 26	Friday, Feb 27	Saturday, Feb 28	Sunday, Feb 29	Monday, Feb 30	Tuesday, Mar 1	Wednesday, Mar 2	Thursday, Mar 3	Friday, Mar 4	Saturday, Mar 5	Sunday, Mar 6	Monday, Mar 7	Tuesday, Mar 8	Wednesday, Mar 9	Thursday, Mar 10	Friday, Mar 11	Saturday, Mar 12	Sunday, Mar 13	Monday, Mar 14	Tuesday, Mar 15	Wednesday, Mar 16	Thursday, Mar 17	Friday, Mar 18	Saturday, Mar 19	Sunday, Mar 20	Monday, Mar 21	Tuesday, Mar 22	Wednesday, Mar 23	Thursday, Mar 24	Friday, Mar 25	Saturday, Mar 26	Sunday, Mar 27	Monday, Mar 28	Tuesday, Mar 29	Wednesday, Mar 30	Thursday, Mar 31	Friday, Apr 1	Saturday, Apr 2	Sunday, Apr 3	Monday, Apr 4	Tuesday, Apr 5	Wednesday, Apr 6	Thursday, Apr 7	Friday, Apr 8	Saturday, Apr 9	Sunday, Apr 10	Monday, Apr 11	Tuesday, Apr 12	Wednesday, Apr 13	Thursday, Apr 14	Friday, Apr 15	Saturday, Apr 16	Sunday, Apr 17	Monday, Apr 18	Tuesday, Apr 19	Wednesday, Apr 20	Thursday, Apr 21	Friday, Apr 22	Saturday, Apr 23	Sunday, Apr 24	Monday, Apr 25	Tuesday, Apr 26	Wednesday, Apr 27	Thursday, Apr 28	Friday, Apr 29	Saturday, Apr 30	Sunday, May 1	Monday, May 2	Tuesday, May 3	Wednesday, May 4	Thursday, May 5	Friday, May 6	Saturday, May 7	Sunday, May 8	Monday, May 9	Tuesday, May 10	Wednesday, May 11	Thursday, May 12	Friday, May 13	Saturday, May 14	Sunday, May 15	Monday, May 16	Tuesday, May 17	Wednesday, May 18	Thursday, May 19	Friday, May 20	Saturday, May 21	Sunday, May 22	Monday, May 23	Tuesday, May 24	Wednesday, May 25	Thursday, May 26	Friday, May 27	Saturday, May 28	Sunday, May 29	Monday, May 30	Tuesday, May 31	Wednesday, Jun 1	Thursday, Jun 2	Friday, Jun 3	Saturday, Jun 4	Sunday, Jun 5	Monday, Jun 6	Tuesday, Jun 7	Wednesday, Jun 8	Thursday, Jun 9	Friday, Jun 10	Saturday, Jun 11	Sunday, Jun 12	Monday, Jun 13	Tuesday, Jun 14	Wednesday, Jun 15	Thursday, Jun 16	Friday, Jun 17	Saturday, Jun 18	Sunday, Jun 19	Monday, Jun 20	Tuesday, Jun 21	Wednesday, Jun 22	Thursday, Jun 23	Friday, Jun 24	Saturday, Jun 25	Sunday, Jun 26	Monday, Jun 27	Tuesday, Jun 28	Wednesday, Jun 29	Thursday, Jun 30	Friday, Jul 1	Saturday, Jul 2	Sunday, Jul 3	Monday, Jul 4	Tuesday, Jul 5	Wednesday, Jul 6	Thursday, Jul 7	Friday, Jul 8	Saturday, Jul 9	Sunday, Jul 10	Monday, Jul 11	Tuesday, Jul 12	Wednesday, Jul 13	Thursday, Jul 14	Friday, Jul 15	Saturday, Jul 16	Sunday, Jul 17	Monday, Jul 18	Tuesday, Jul 19	Wednesday, Jul 20	Thursday, Jul 21	Friday, Jul 22	Saturday, Jul 23	Sunday, Jul 24	Monday, Jul 25	Tuesday, Jul 26	Wednesday, Jul 27	Thursday, Jul 28	Friday, Jul 29	Saturday, Jul 30	Sunday, Jul 31	Monday, Aug 1	Tuesday, Aug 2	Wednesday, Aug 3	Thursday, Aug 4	Friday, Aug 5	Saturday, Aug 6	Sunday, Aug 7	Monday, Aug 8	Tuesday, Aug 9	Wednesday, Aug 10	Thursday, Aug 11	Friday, Aug 12	Saturday, Aug 13	Sunday, Aug 14	Monday, Aug 15	Tuesday, Aug 16	Wednesday, Aug 17	Thursday, Aug 18	Friday, Aug 19	Saturday, Aug 20	Sunday, Aug 21	Monday, Aug 22	Tuesday, Aug 23	Wednesday, Aug 24	Thursday, Aug 25	Friday, Aug 26	Saturday, Aug 27	Sunday, Aug 28	Monday, Aug 29	Tuesday, Aug 30	Wednesday, Aug 31	Thursday, Sep 1	Friday, Sep 2	Saturday, Sep 3	Sunday, Sep 4	Monday, Sep 5	Tuesday, Sep 6	Wednesday, Sep 7	Thursday, Sep 8	Friday, Sep 9	Saturday, Sep 10	Sunday, Sep 11	Monday, Sep 12	Tuesday, Sep 13	Wednesday, Sep 14	Thursday, Sep 15	Friday, Sep 16	Saturday, Sep 17	Sunday, Sep 18	Monday, Sep 19	Tuesday, Sep 20	Wednesday, Sep 21	Thursday, Sep 22	Friday, Sep 23	Saturday, Sep 24	Sunday, Sep 25	Monday, Sep 26	Tuesday, Sep 27	Wednesday, Sep 28	Thursday, Sep 29
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THREE SISTERS

CONTACT SHEET

<u>Name</u>	<u>Staff/Position</u>	<u>Phone #</u>
David Garfield	Director	H: (212) 239-2052
Susan White	S. M.	B: (917) 982-8658 H: (718) 934-0380
Yung-Yu Arthur Gau	A.S.M.	H: (718) 258-3796
John Scheffer	Set Designer	H: (718) 852-6808
Michael Appel	Lighting Designer	H: (718) 646-5099
Andrea Roberts	Costume Designer	H: (718) 857-4995
Paule Innocent	Assistant Costume Designer	H: (718) 439-6353
Howard Becknell	Faculty Lighting Advisor	H: (718) 237-0352 O: (718) 951-5495
Rebecca Cunningham	Faculty Costume Designer	H: (718) 856-3735 O: (718) 951-4259
Michael Turque	Production Supervisor	O: (718) 951-5495 H: (212) 580-8583
Michael Hairston	Technical Director	O: (718) 951-4486 H: (516) 483-2592
Harry Miller	Technical Supervisor	O: (718) 951-4260
Judd Silverman	Crew Coordinator	O: (718) 951-5495 H: (718) 857-0398

*as of 9/6/1993

THREE SISTERS

CAST

<u>Name</u>	<u>Phone #</u>	<u>Character</u>
Michael Cesarano	(718) 468-2934	ANDRÉI
Patricia Geiger	(212) 865-0301	NATASHA
Maryanne Arena	(718) 258-7409	OLGA
Jennifer Beggs	(718) 339-9119	MASHA
Denise Greber	() -	IRINA
Walker G. Harman Jr.	(212) 213-0936	KULYGIN
Gary Morabito	(212) 875-1144	VERSHININ
Denis Gawley	() -	TÜZENBACH
Dan Haft	(718) 643-0919	SOLYONY
Rory Schwartz	(212) 875-1144	CHEBUTYKIN
Jonathan Lopez	(718) 832-2879	FEDOTIK
Marshall B. Johnson	(718) 338-8723	RODÉ
Vito Settinen	(718) 259-5021	FERAPONT
Bonnie Ahmedalwasfi	(212) 340-1269	ANFISA
Nancy Kelly	(718) 763-0982	MAID
William Hernandez	(718) 232-8904	SOLDIER

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

Backstage Payphone	(718) 434-9623
Box Office	(718) 951-4518
Costume Shop	(718) 951-4259
Medical Assistance	(718) 951-5858
Security	(718) 951-5511
Emergency Hotline	(718) 951-5444
Theatre Department Office	(718) 951-5666
Ladies Room Payphone	(718) 434-9683

Contact Sheet.

APPENDIX G: Letter to members of the Graduate Committee regarding thesis performance evaluation meeting.



Department of Theater

October 12, 1993

TO: MEMBERS OF THE GRADUATE COMMITTEE
PROFESSORS BECKNELL, BULLARD, GARFIELD, LEITER,
LINNEY, ORTOLANI, SCHEFFLER; INVITED GUESTS: CUNNINGHAM,
TURQUE

FROM: Prof. Stephen Langley

RE: Three Sisters - Performance Roles

On Wednesday, October 27th, at 12:15 p.m., Room 319A, there will be a meeting of the Graduate Committee to evaluate the thesis performance roles of the following 2nd year acting students:

Arena, Maryanne
✓ Beggs, Jennifer
Cesarano, Michael
Gawley, Denis

There will be a discussion prior to meeting with the students.

Brooklyn College of The City University of New York, Brooklyn, New York 11210 718 780-5666

NOTES

- 1 Ronald Hingley, "Chekhov's Comments on The Three Sisters," in Modern Drama, ed. Anthony Caputi (New York and London: W.W. Norton and Company, 1966), 372.
- 2 ibid, 373.
- 3 ibid, 372.
- 4 J.L. Styan, "The Three Sisters" chap. in Chekhov In Performance: A Commentary on the Major Plays (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 149.
- 5 ibid, 148.
- 6 Anton Chekhov, The Three Sisters, trans. Jean-Claude van Itallie (New York: Dramatists Play Service, Inc., 1979), 5.
- 7 ibid, 13.
- 8 ibid, 14.
- 9 ibid, 53.
- 10 Anton Chekhov, The Three Sisters chap. in Anton Chekhov's Plays (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1977), 149.
- 11 Michael Shurtleff, Audition (New York: Bantam, 1978), 143.

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- Gilles, Daniel. Chekhov: Observer Without Illusion. Translated by Charles Lam Markmann. New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1968.
- Hingley, Ronald. "Chekhov's Comments on The Three Sisters." In Modern Drama, ed. Anthony Caputi, 369-374. New York and London: W.W. Norton and Company, 1966.
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- Wilson, Edmund. A Window on Russia: for the Use of Foreign Readers. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1972.